



BRETHREN  
PREACHING  
TODAY



# BRETHREN PREACHING TODAY

*James H. Beahm — A. C. Baugher — S. S. Blough  
Clement Bontrager — S. Loren Bowman — Charles L. Cox  
B. Wayne Crist — Dean L. Frantz — Ira H. Frantz  
I. V. Funderburgh — Paul S. Hersch — Stewart B. Kauffman  
Bernard N. King — Lawrence E. Lehman — John D. Long  
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Vernon F. Miller — R. E. Mohler — O. W. Neher  
Leland A. Nelson — Jacob F. Replogle — Carroll S. Ringgold  
Vernon F. Schwalm — Francis L. Shenefelt — Murray L. Wagner  
Ralph E. White — Albert C. Wieand — Harry K. Zeller, Jr.  
Charles E. Zunkel — Nevin H. Zuck*



BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE  
ELGIN, ILLINOIS

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## *Introduction*

PREACHING has always held an important place in the life of the Church of the Brethren. From the beginning, perhaps more than in any other church of Pietistic origin, the Brethren have made the preaching of the Word of God an integral part of public worship. And throughout the more than two centuries of her life the church has produced many notable preachers of deep spiritual insight and persuasive power who have not only molded the life of her own people, but who, in many instances, have had a far-reaching influence in the community and nation at large.

However, the church has lost much, because few of the great sermons of Brethren preachers have been recorded. With characteristic humility and modesty many of our best ministers have left their works unpublished.

We believe that the Church of the Brethren has a unique message for our world; therefore, the Pastors' Association of the Church of the Brethren has been hoping for some time to bring together in one volume a cross section of Brethren preaching, the first such book ever attempted. We have encouraged ministers in all phases of church life to submit sermons for possible publication. It was not the purpose of the Association to promote a sermon contest, but rather to secure the widest variety of good Brethren preaching.

One hundred twenty-nine ministers responded with one hundred forty-seven sermons. From these, thirty-two sermons have been selected for publication in this volume. They do not necessarily represent the best preaching in our churches, but we do believe they are truly representative. Included among our contributors

are ministers young and old, of churches in both urban and rural areas, of congregations both large and small. They are pastors, college presidents, professors, field secretaries, and one active Christian layman.

If this volume of Brethren sermons is well received and proves interesting and helpful to the life of the church, it is possible that other such volumes will be published from time to time. No finer record could be preserved of the Brethren message for the time in which we live than a series of such volumes as Brethren Preaching Today.

The Pastors' Association wishes to express its deep appreciation to the judges, Dr. C. D. Bonsack, Dr. Rufus D. Bowman, and Dr. Edward Frantz, who so painstakingly and conscientiously read the manuscripts submitted and selected these sermons. A special word of thanks must be given the editor, H. A. Brandt, who has given generously of his time and skill in the myriad details of preparing the book for publication.

It is our hope that this book will not only help to stimulate Brethren ministers to good preaching, but that it will also be a source of inspiration to all who read it. Through the "foolishness of preaching" let the gospel be proclaimed until His kingdom comes and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

*Paul Minnich Robinson, President  
Pastors' Association, Church of the Brethren  
Hagerstown, Maryland*

## *Preface*

FOR a number of years there has been an increasing interest in a book of sermons which would be representative of Brethren preaching today. However, the matter of proper sponsorship was not clear until it was discovered that the Pastors' Association of the Church of the Brethren was interested in such an undertaking.

At the meeting of this association, which was held in connection with the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren at North Manchester, Indiana, in 1945, it was decided to encourage the book-of-sermons project. As a first substantial step a committee of three judges was named by the association. In due time the ministers as listed in the current Yearbook of the Church of the Brethren were urged to submit their best sermons. It was suggested that sermons interpreting a Brethren ideal or doctrine in terms of its meaning today, the presentation of the principal points in one's personal faith, or the treatment of any great Christian doctrine in the light of Brethren history and conviction, would serve to give unity and significance to the proposed book.

The judges chosen by the Pastors' Association were: Charles D. Bonsack, for many years general secretary of the General Mission Board; Rufus D. Bowman, president of Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Ill.; Edward Frantz, formerly editor of the Gospel Messenger, official organ of the Church of the Brethren. As the manuscripts were received they were numbered and recorded by the Book Publishing Committee of the Brethren Publishing House. With the authors' names deleted, the manuscripts were then sent to the judges in turn, who independently indicated whether a sermon was nominated



for the book, to be held as reserve, or not to be considered. Since a total of one hundred forty-seven manuscripts were submitted it is evident that the task of reading and judging them was a considerable one. The judges undertook their assignment with a keen sense of responsibility and deserve sincere thanks for the conscientious and efficient way in which they did their work.

After the manuscripts had been judged there remained such editorial tasks as making an over-all plan for the book, integrating the materials recommended, editing of copy and deciding on details of the actual manufacturing of the book. These responsibilities fell to the book publishing committee and the literary editor of the Brethren Publishing House. The persons thus involved were Ernest G. Hoff, Ora W. Garber, W. Harold Row and the writer.

This volume is naturally of primary interest to Brethren readers. It was written by Brethren preachers for Brethren folk. However, it is believed that many who know something of the Brethren will be interested to learn somewhat more concerning Brethren thought and faith. Thus friends both far and near, as well as children of the Brethren household, are invited to glean as richly as they can from the pages of Brethren Preaching Today.

*H. A. Brandt, Chairman  
Book Publishing Committee*

# *A Chosen Generation*

JAMES H. BEAHM

Pastor, Bremen, Indiana

*Ye are a chosen generation (1 Peter 2:9a)*

God's Word challenges men many times, by reminding them who they are; for example, "We are now the sons of God"; and again, "We are laborers together with God." And there are many other examples of this same approach, one of which is the text of this message, "Ye are a chosen generation." In writing this to Israel Peter challenged God's people with their true calling and their position in relation to God. He emphasized that they were a chosen generation, chosen not alone for salvation and for special privilege, but as light bearers of their age. This was true not just because they were Israelites, but because of what they stood for and believed. This carried with it much responsibility; Peter was here reminding the Hebrew people that their relationship to God meant for them not only a unique privilege but also a unique responsibility. They had a great heritage; to them much had been given. They were stewards of a great trust and of them much would be required. But Peter speaks to us today even as he did to the Hebrews then; in a very real sense we too are a chosen generation.

*It Is a Privilege to Live Today*

SUCH developments of science, medicine and culture have been made as to be inconceivable. We have in our day things at our disposal that ought to make life fuller and provide sufficient time and energy to be used for the advancement of the world. We have now the greatest possibilities for the development of the work of world missions which we have ever had. Here in America we are the best fed, best clothed, and best housed people of any nation on the face of the earth. But with all these material privileges we dare not overlook that this is a day of great spiritual privileges and responsibilities.

To be able to hold up the way of Christ in a world of hatred, suspicion and despair is a great opportunity and a challenge. Things may be dark, insecure and shaking; it seems as if the way of love is trampled under a barrage of fact and conversation, and amid the world's attempt to reconstruct and organize for unity the basis for reconstruction and unity seems to be forgotten. It seems still to be true—"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne." We must never lose sight of the rest of this statement: "But that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above his own." This is our generation and it is a challenging day to be alive, but we need to look at our possibilities rather than so much at our problems. We must think less about "what the world has come to" and more about "what has come into the world." One day, when Jesus was with His disciples and the multitude, as it became twilight the disciples began to fret because of the problem of caring for the people; they were thinking of the people's needs, their inability to provide, and the growing darkness. But one thing they had overlooked: the power of the Master when someone was will-

ing to consecrate what he had for the Master's use. We cannot afford to overlook that power today; it is still available. It is a privilege to live in a day like ours!

### *We Are Chosen to Be the Children of God*

OF course, this has been a reality throughout all the ages, but no less is it true today. "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." All of us are chosen to be God's children; there is no greater calling than this. To be sure, not everyone lives up to the challenge of sonship; but, nevertheless, those who do not are still God's own. When the prodigal son went out to have his own way and sank into the depths of wrong and despair, he was still his father's child. That accounts for the fact that he still felt the pull toward home. We have a responsibility to God, and also a *response-ability*, that is, an ability to respond, in harmony with the will of God. This is true because we belong to him. Of course, if we do not live up to this sonship we will not receive the fellowship and blessing of "the Father's house." We are chosen to be children of God; it is a great challenge to act like God's children.

### *We Are Chosen to Serve God*

God has deemed it wise to plan that his work shall be done by those whose hearts are consecrated to his will; the only way for God's work to get done is for men to do it. Of course, his Spirit works in and through the hearts of men; but God still works by using the work of men. In a very real sense then, we are chosen to be the servants of God in the world. "We are fellow workmen for God." This has been true of men of every age. But the greater the need, the greater the challenge; the greater the darkness, the greater the need of light.

We may be in the world "for such a time as this." These words were said of Esther when she was called upon to go before the king and make a plea for the life of her people: "You have come to the kingdom for such a time as this." Our church has had a unique service to render to the world and a definite place in the program of the kingdom of God; we have survived these centuries of struggle and persecution, and today that same genius is yet alive. It may be that we have survived "for such a time as this." The world needs the message of our heritage of peace, the simple life, fellowship, and emphasis on the Word of God as the final authority for life. We need to ask the question, "What does the Book say?" If we can help to give this emphasis a rebirth we will have rendered a service to the world and to our God.

One of the greatest things we can do now is to show the realism of the kingdom as we seek to do good to all men; we have the greatest opportunity to show the love of Christ as we seek to alleviate suffering over this world. If we lift up our eyes we can see the gaunt faces of those who are starving, and if we open our ears we can hear their cries. We are a chosen generation: chosen to show the love of God to men everywhere as we try to give a cup of cold water in his name.

### *We Are Chosen to Evangelize the World*

It is our privilege and responsibility to go and make disciples of all men. To see the world become Christian in one generation, I believe, does not need to be only a dream. I believe it would be possible to carry out the slogan of the Student Volunteer Movement of a few years ago: "Evangelize the world in one generation." Obviously if it is ever to be done at all it must be done in one generation, because, if it were not done, there would be a new generation and the process would not be completed.

This is a part of the challenge of being a chosen generation—chosen to be witnesses of Christ to all men. Suppose there would be one Christian going out to win another and it would take a year to do it; then those two would go out the next year and win two more; the following year those four would win four more, and so on. In about thirty-three years, or less than one generation, the entire world would be Christianized. But what has happened? We have had the good news for about two thousand years and no generation has fulfilled this possibility. The trouble is that we have not worked at being Christians; our own statistics of net gains prove our failures in this regard. When Christ gave his commission to his disciples he included us also. Thus we need to realize that witnessing for Christ in the world is not just a task for the ministry; it is not something to which you are elected. But it is a privilege and a responsibility you accept when you accept Christ; you become a witness by virtue of that reality.

We need not look far until we realize vividly that the world needs the message we claim to possess: a message of peace, joy, love, faith, hope and salvation; and we are chosen to see that the world has this message.

*We Are Chosen to Be God's Instruments for the Work of His Kingdom*

It is in our hands, the privilege of holding up before the world the eternal virtues of faith in one's self, in others, and in God, hope for a better world and for eternity, and love as the greatest force in the world.

It is our task to build, create and save; it is part of the kingdom of God to build rather than to tear down, to reconcile rather than to stir up strife, to save instead of to destroy. We are called to be "repairers of the breach," as Isaiah puts it. The mission of Christ is our mission

also. When Jesus read from Isaiah 61 and proclaimed that these words stated his mission in the world, he also was proclaiming the Christian mission today. Look again at these words: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes; they shall raise up the former desolations of many generations." We are chosen to carry out the mission of Christ in the world; he works through men and he has given us today a great challenge and a great responsibility; we are instruments in God's hands to advance his kingdom until "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

*To serve the present age,  
My calling to fulfill;  
O, may it all my powers engage  
To do my Master's will.*

# *The Price of Wisdom*

A. C. BAUGHER

President of Elizabethtown College

## *Job 28*

MILLENIUMS ago huge animals called dinosaurs roamed the earth. Their chief characteristic was their huge size, often attaining to eighty feet in length and to a weight of from thirty-five to forty tons. In comparison with other animals that lived then and survive today, they had small heads and large bodies. The dinosaurs were big but not fit. These animals with huge bodies and small brains have disappeared. They did not have intelligence enough to meet the problems which they had to face. They had brute strength but they lacked brains. They were long on bone and muscle but short on brain power.

Today, man has made an enormous body for himself. Through the automobile and the airplane he has multiplied his power of locomotion a hundred fold; through the radio he has amplified his voice a million times; by means of the machine he has increased his strength so that "he overturneth the mountains by the roots" and "cutteth out rivers among the rocks." Man has made for himself a dinosaurlike body. The question that we face now is: "Do we have intelligence and wisdom enough to meet the



new demands of life, or will man suffer the fate of the dinosaurs?"

*Man Has Been Endowed With a Mind*

MAN was made in the image of God. He was made to be a co-worker and a co-creator with God. When the mind of man plays upon matter, he appropriates, adapts and fabricates the material world about him to fit his needs. The writer of Job, in chapter 28, expresses this thought beautifully.

"Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone. . . . He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing. He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light."

Dr. Taggart, professor of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, once told me the story of a young man who listened to him lecture on how to make nitroglycerine. Following the class period, the student went to the laboratory and made a half pint of the explosive. When he had finished his experiment, he came to Dr. Taggart to ask him what he should do with it. He knew about its power, and its danger, but he did not know how to use the power.

It has been known for two thousand years that coal burns, but it took man one thousand nine hundred years to find a practical use for coal other than to burn it. It took him nineteen centuries to discover the ways of making dyes, drugs, perfumes, synthetic rubber and nylon stockings from coal.

Early in the past century Malthus advanced the theory that sometime the population of the earth would catch up with the food supply. The constant threat of this unhappy prospect has been a major cause for wars. Today, with the application of scientific principles, no nation

need fear an age of scarcity. The earth stands ready and eager to produce all the food, clothing and shelter necessary for the entire population of the earth.

Henry Van Loon, in his *Story of Mankind*, points out that a box half a mile long, half a mile wide and half a mile high would be large enough to contain the entire human race. This is only one eighth of a cubic mile of mankind. Compare with this the millions of cubic miles of raw material that the earth produces, and then think how futile it is for us to fear for the productivity of the earth!

Man has the necessary scientific knowledge to produce an adequate supply of food, clothing, and shelter for the entire human race, but we lack the wisdom to apply our knowledge so as to avoid starvation for millions.

#### *Man Was Instructed to Subdue the Earth*

OUR annual war against insects is more costly in both money and material than was either World War I or II. It is estimated that in one square mile of ordinary farm land there are more than two billion insects. These must be fed and they are generally voracious eaters. They consume more food in one year than man does. The weight of the insect world is believed to be greater than the combined weight of the animal world.

After every war, excepting World War II, had ended, the typhus-bearing louse killed more men than were killed in battle.

But insects can be controlled. Consider the mosquito, *Anopheles Gambiae*, of Africa, which has for centuries been the deadly carrier of a type of malaria which killed hundreds of thousands of natives every year. In 1930 this mosquito crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Africa to Brazil, probably by airplane, and started its campaign of destruction in South America. In a few years it had spread

through an area of more than twelve thousand square miles, bringing death and crippling illness to countless people, and threatening to become a deadly foe to all South America. But in a few years the Rockefeller Foundation and the governments of these countries, with the aid of modern insecticides, succeeded in completely wiping out the *Anopheles Gambiae* mosquito in South America. This is a striking example of how, with the aid of our new insecticides, man can conquer the insect world. With the sulfa drugs, DDT and penicillin we are making progress in wiping out others of man's deadly enemies.

*Man Has Been Endowed With an Unquenchable Thirst for Knowledge*

WHEN God made man in his own image, he endowed him with Godlike capacities and abilities. One of these characteristics is his undiscourageable urge to seek for truth. The two-hundred-inch telescope and the electronic microscope are mighty symbols of man's desire to explore the universal and infinitesimal world within the atom. Man in his pursuit of truth is constantly extending the borders of knowledge so that new worlds are ever appearing.

The tree of good and evil is ever before him. Man must decide today whether he will choose life or death. The great scientific discoveries can be harnessed to man's destruction or to his welfare. Synthetic dyes can be used either as beautiful colors or as deadly weapons of war. Our stupendous reservoirs of energy can be used to plow our fields, build our roads, irrigate our lands, or destroy our homes and cities. The accumulation of knowledge can become an instrument of death—if man decides to use it thus.

Man is doing a fairly successful job at subduing the earth. The first eleven verses of Job 28 are prophetic.

Man can control the animal and the insect world. He stalks the deadly bacteria to their lair. He follows the stars in their courses. But he is discovering that his ever-present enemy is within himself where no microscope can peer, and behind doors which no physical power can open. Small wonder then that the writer exclaimed, "But where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?"

What the world needs today is not just more knowledge, but knowledge motivated by virtue and love.

#### *But Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?*

THERE are three phases to an understanding of the nature of wisdom. The first is the sense of *discernment*. Wisdom is that discretion which enables a man to know what is fit to be done according to person, time, place and manner. It is what Emerson called prudence. This was the wisdom that Solomon asked for and received.

The second phase of wisdom is that of *common sense*. The expression, *common sense*, does not imply that it is something common. Indeed, it is a rare quality for one to be able to discern what is and what is not appropriate in a particular situation. All of us have known people who have never had the opportunity to acquire much so-called book knowledge. In fact, they may never have been inside a high school, but they had such a keen sense of values that even in strange situations they somehow knew what to do and say. Such people are rare souls. They really have an uncommon sense. They have the rare gift to sense the appropriate.

The third and highest aspect of wisdom is the gift of great mental ability. Modern educators call it a *high intelligence quotient*. In its best form it is a superior mental ability seasoned with discernment and common sense. Frequently we hear people ask why it was that Jesus

called fishermen, tax collectors, and tentmakers to take on the responsibility of establishing his church. As a matter of fact he called men who were transparently honest and sincere, who were filled with a zeal for holy things, and who possessed good judgment. These men undoubtedly had great intellects. They possessed the ability to make critical discernments, and they had the gift of common sense. The records which tell of their achievements, and their writings in the Holy Scriptures, bear out these deductions. When such men became fired with a divine enthusiasm they could not be stopped. They had an intelligent zeal for righteousness and holiness. This is what James referred to when he said, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

Zeal and sincerity coupled with low mental ability can easily produce fanatics and radicals; but when zeal and sincerity are presided over by great mental ability, one can expect real leadership and achievement. Jesus selected leaders who were transparently honest, who were filled with a holy enthusiasm and wisdom. When such men get started on a program they cannot easily be discouraged.

Cicero had the same thing in mind when he said: "Wisdom is the only thing which can relieve us from the sway of the passions and the fear of danger, and which can teach us to bear the injuries of fortune itself with moderation, and which shows us all the ways which lead to tranquility and peace."

Rufus M. Jones, the great Quaker philosopher, said: "There come high moments when we find ourselves where we know we belong, when the Beyond is here, and the Yonder is present. These eternal moments take the soul

to the very heart of reality. Many times I have found my way home in the dark because my feet felt the road when my eyes could not see it. There is something in us, deeper than hands or feet, that finds the way to the Central Reality, and when we arrive we know it.”\*

“The price of wisdom is above rubies. Wisdom cannot be gotten for gold or pearls. Let him that lacketh wisdom ask of God. He shall supply his every need.

“Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.” This is the message to a groping, sick and weary world seeking peace and safety and stability and salvation.

I want to remind you who have reached maturity that the four pillars of the house of wisdom are transparent honesty, personal purity, respect for things sacred and a deep spirit of devotion to God. These constitute the price of wisdom. They cannot be bought with money. You must build them into your life. If you do this well, you will never fail.

---

\*Jones, Rufus M., *The Radiant Life*, The MacMillan Company, pp. 31-32

# *The Fundamental Teachings of Jesus*

S. S. BLOUGH

Pastor, Pleasant Valley Church, Ohio

*John 3:1-21*

JESUS is known as the world's greatest teacher. "He taught as one having authority." He had the truth and knew the needs of men. The word came from him with life and power. It touched men's hearts so that they "were astonished at his doctrine."

The opening events of Jesus' ministry had given impetus and influence to his work. Large audiences pressed near to hear him. Some were surprised and some alarmed at his wisdom and power. His divinity was confirmed by the voice of God and the witness of the Spirit at his baptism, as also by John the Baptist and the first miracle.

The rulers heard and were critical, but in Nicodemus we have one who had the inquiring mind, who sought to learn more of him. Jesus loved such and welcomed them. Nicodemus addresses him as "a teacher come from God." He recognizes his power as being from God, and hopes that he will tell him more of himself. He does not yet recognize him as Messiah. Jesus has a plan of his own, as always, for the occasion.

Three fundamental themes stand out in Jesus' teaching:

the absolute need of regeneration (verses 1-13); atonement by the death of Jesus (verses 14-17); salvation by the faith of the individual (verses 18-21).

### *The Absolute Need of Regeneration*

JESUS passes lightly the praise of Nicodemus and assumes large knowledge of the requirements of the kingdom of God. These are things of the spirit. Regeneration, or the new birth, must first be within. This is most important. Here is a ruler standing among his people, but this does not give him high rank in the spiritual kingdom. Jesus' use of *verily* signifies the verdict of eternal truth. A saved life is a new life. "Ye must be born again." A saved soul is a new creation, formed anew in Christ Jesus.

"You call me teacher. Granted that I am, I must have followers who are born of God." Here is a mystery, but it is also a fact, thus making regeneration a fundamental doctrine. The lack of understanding of things of the spirit by this "master in Israel" was rather surprising. Jesus strove to make the matter clear once for all.

Jesus teaches the twofold requirement of water and Holy Spirit baptism—"of water and the Spirit." Not either one alone. He also places the order of succession in this regenerating process. While the outward symbol of cleansing is administered, the inward cleansing from sin is being accomplished. All other things being in correct form, here one is born anew—a spiritual regeneration takes place. But must even a Jewish ruler be baptized? Jesus says this is necessary to enter the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus fails to comprehend, but neither can he understand the mystery of the wind. "Nicodemus, you must receive these spiritual mysteries with as much grace as you receive those in nature." But this is difficult for such a strong religionist. It is hard to lay aside a long-



established faith or custom and have the new one become familiar.

This fundamental truth stands for the entire new dispensation. It is still required and needs to be taught as one of the fundamental doctrines of salvation. Nothing is more emphatic in all the New Testament teachings than this. Men must still heed this twofold baptism of water and the Spirit. Relying on human interpretations, men try to satisfy themselves with less than what the Savior taught. But his *verily, verily* and his repetition of the impossibility of entering the kingdom of God must be the deciding factor. Perfect obedience to his teaching opens the way into the kingdom for whosoever will.

This is a special birth, as he says in John 1:13. "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is this birth which produces children of God. There must be a birth from heaven before there can be an inheritance with God. Paul spoke of it as a new creation wrought in the human soul. It was to be a spiritual experience, not connected with the dispensation of law but with that of grace.

The change to the new life becomes visible in the Christian by the fruits of the spirit. So may men never fail to emphasize that which Jesus made so important! May we ever make it a veritable "thus saith the Lord" and receive the blessing from him!

### *Atonement by the Death of Jesus*

WHILE emphasis was placed on the necessity of the new birth for salvation, back of it all is Jesus as Savior. Considering the need of a new nature for sinful man, how can this be effected? Jesus says that Nicodemus must believe his teaching or salvation cannot be his. "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" This is to say:

"There are richer and deeper truths yet to be learned, hence you must follow my teaching and explanation with a view to receiving it. What I have told you is a great truth, but what I am going to tell you now is yet more mysterious."

"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; the living God was manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). This requires even more faith to receive. Jesus then follows with a familiar Old Testament illustration. Here is enlightenment on this mysterious matter. As a ruler in Israel, Nicodemus was thoroughly familiar with this story and the purpose of the brazen serpent. Lifting up the serpent presented a way for the transgressors in the wilderness; and Christ was lifted up for the transgressors of the whole world, through all time. This is heaven's method of saving man from sin. It is the atonement. It is the way of mystery, but it is the teaching of fundamental truth to this seeking soul.

Consider two things in the atonement. First, the sacrifice of the Son. This must have touched his soul. Later as he assisted in taking Jesus from the cross he must have recalled vividly this teaching and been drawn closer to the fact of the atonement.

Men may depend too much on their works to save them. For those who are wholly consecrated to the living way of our God, it is well also to learn that nothing physical will avail for the soul. A great abundance of wealth cannot save. "What can a man give in exchange for his soul?" Jesus presents himself to the unsaved soul. "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me."

The second is the outstanding love of the Father. Job at one time said: "With God is terrible majesty" (Job 37:22). But here another attitude of God is emphasized.

The divine property of love comes to the fore as Job could not have comprehended. Where can man fly from God's majestic wrath but to his amazing love! There was a greatness of love necessary both in the Father and in the Son. Only from the life and teaching of Jesus can this be fully known. In this passage we find the golden text of the Bible. It tells of this matchless love. Should not this love manifested by the heavenly Father bring men to condemnation and send them to the atonement of the Christ? For Nicodemus, Christ's death was still future, perhaps making it for him more difficult to receive. To us who have the entire story, it should be less difficult to accept. Such all-embracing love! Such matchless grace! Such redemption from sin and adoption into sonship!

### *Salvation by the Faith of the Individual*

God has established a wonderful and beautiful way of salvation. But here the faith of the individual enters. The value of faith is not in itself, but is determined by its object. The entire plan of God—all the coming, the work, the suffering and death of Jesus—will not in itself bring salvation to man. While it is a free gift there are certain requirements to make the gift effective. The gospel story becomes clear to those who choose to understand. Salvation is not a matter of a great work on our part. Paul was clear in this when he wrote, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:8-10). "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). Works come as the

result of a saving faith, but they do not save. No soul that comes on the wings of faith to Christ will be turned away.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." Those who love darkness better than life refuse a savior. They hate the light and so bring the condemnation of a righteous God upon themselves. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." It is the faith of the individual that leads him to the cleansing blood. This puts into action the grace of the Lord to him. On the strength of man's knowledge of what Christ is, and what he has done for humanity, the soul goes on toward him trustfully, lovingly, gratefully as his Savior. When Jesus says, "Ye must be born again," the believing soul receives his statement and obeying the command is born again, so becoming a new creature in him.

On the other hand, the evil heart of unbelief can not know the truth. God's Word is truth and the one doing the truth shall be able to know God, and to know him is life and peace. Why is it that so many do not come to Jesus? When a loving, gracious God has spoken and acted, and when Jesus, the Son, has permitted himself to be slain? How sad it is that those who so badly need salvation should be lost and the entire plan fail for them!

Whether Nicodemus ever became a follower of Jesus we may not surely know, but he did help in caring for Jesus after his death. It seems reasonable to believe that he was a secret follower at least. Yet how changed might have been the situation for him, and what might he not have done for the kingdom, had he openly accepted the teaching and entered fully into its membership and fellowship! The contemplation of such loss is sad, and yet how often it is repeated in our present age!

THEN let us examine again the statements as found here and confirm ourselves in their importance. This will give assurance of our salvation in God's way. No one but Jesus was able to reveal doctrine so certain and divine. No one but Jesus could give us so completely the will of God for our salvation. It is a blessed thing to know what he knows—the truth as it is in him. Such fundamental faith and practice are required for acceptance with God.

As the gospel is preached it is important that men go further than did Nicodemus. May men be persuaded to come to him not only as a great teacher, but as a great Savior. Here are some fundamental doctrines not to be forgotten!

## *"What Doth the Lord Require?"*

CLEMENT BONTRAGER

District Fieldman, State of Washington

*Micah 6:6-8*

SOMEONE has suggested that every man is a prisoner of his own age. This is only partly true, for some men imprison their own age and bring it into subjection unto themselves. History tells of those who towered above the dead level of their day. Be it so, most of us are still prisoners of an age. We think we know the great finalities, but tomorrow will prove us wrong in many things. Today we are blind. We cannot see well because we are close to the baffling problems of the now. We "cannot see the wood for the trees." Nor will the coming of another day solve the problem here. Someone has suggested that the only thing we learn from history is that man learns nothing from history.

A long time ago there lived among the hills of Palestine a people very much like ourselves. They had their problems. A day of trouble was to come unless men changed their ways. The prophet Micah spoke in clear words about the doom to come. It came several hundreds of years after he spoke. The causes of destruction were already to be seen. Government was corrupt and govern-

ment officials were evil. The preachers taught and preached for gain. Bribery and cruelty were common. So very serious was the whole affair that the prophet could say, "There is no good man left. Like as when you pick the fruit from trees and then go out to find some, so, all good men have perished. The good men who are left are like thorns and briers—you cannot depend on them. So bad are conditions," said the prophet, "that you had better not trust a friend, for he might betray your confidence. Do not even talk too freely with your wife, for she might participate in common but hurtful gossip."

And yet, these people thought they were very religious. They had their preachers. Their churches were full and the offerings were large. The people knew that they could not evade God. They brought the fruits from their farms and gave them to God. They brought many a yearling calf. They gave the consecrated oil, until it flowed like rivers. They even gave their children. They seemed a devoted people. A traveler going through the country would likely say, "What a religious people!"

THEIR problem was the same as is our problem: that of being so close to a situation that one misses the truth in its more important outlines. They thought, for instance, that God would be satisfied with them if they only worshiped in a big enough way—if they bowed enough, if they gave enough. On weekdays they could be ruled by the devil if on a Sabbath they went piously to church. They thought a complex life could be atoned for by a complicated worship. And so their country went to its doom for lack of a simple faith. Here I want to say that if we miss the great simplicities we miss everything. Are we, like Israel, enamoured with the complex? The need of the hour is not another government bureau, or

another economic system, or a change in the philosophy of government, but a better citizenry.

This is just what the prophet was trying to tell his people: that worship and life were quite simple matters, that God was easily accessible, and that he did not demand the impossible or the fantastic from anyone. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good." It was as simple as to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

*"He Hath Showed Thee, O Man, What Is Good"*

IN our heart of hearts we know the prophet was right. Slimy oil cannot solve life's problems, and we know it. Bleating sheep cannot carry our requests to God. The problems of a weary world cannot be solved by killing babies.

*We know the paths in which our feet should press;  
Across our hearts are written thy decrees. . . .  
Knowledge we ask not, knowledge thou hast lent.*

We know, and we know that we know. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good."

We know the will of God when we look within ourselves. As simple as *me*, so simple is the will of God. His will is written in the flesh and bones of men and women. It is because we do not know ourselves that we are ignorant of our needs. Like the prodigal, when man comes to himself he finds the way to the Father's house; and when he arrives he finds arms open, the fatted calf prepared and life set to music.

But more. We know the will of God as it is revealed in nature. He who lifts up his eyes to the hills knows that his help comes from the Lord. So true is this that Paul dared to tell the Romans that man is without any excuse, that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the



things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." The sun rising and setting, the coming and going of the seasons, the majesty of the hills, and the glory of twinkling stars all speak of God and his will.

But there is still another way in which man may know the will of God. Human experience tells his story. If man but takes time to read, to study the sciences, or whatever, he rubs elbows with God. For history is *his story*, and literature reveals his accumulated will. The symbols of mathematics and the discoveries in the sciences reveal him as truly as does his revealed will. Small wonder that some of the great men of science are devout worshippers at his shrine!

The supreme revelation of truth, however, is a Person. When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," he said what has since become very apparent. It is in Christ that man finds a rock upon which he may safely build; and it is upon this rock that man breaks himself if he refuses him. For Jesus is as unyielding and inexorable as stone. When he taught that man's first duty was to love God supremely, and that next in order was for man to love his neighbor as himself, he was not playing with words. Thus it must be, or man destroys himself. When Jesus went to the cross he made clear to man the eternal struggle of God against sin and evil. And man will never get beyond the truth of that great drama nor beyond his deep need for its atoning values. If man knows Jesus he knows the will of God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Now when man discovers the will of God he finds it simple, rather easy to follow, not at all fantastic but utterly sane and lovely. What is the will of God? What does man's essential self, what does nature, what does human experience, what does Jesus say? Three things, according

to the text: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

*"Do Justly"*

WHAT a world if man were just! We know in general what this means: to live right, to be right and all that. If all of us were exacting in the demands of self-discipline, if all men lived up to the highest standards of honesty and fair play—what a world! What injustice as man deals with his brother of another color, another creed, another country! And justice we must learn, for our survival depends upon it. Take the problem of color. Suppose the colored peoples of the world take it upon themselves to treat us whites as we have been treating them. They may try it. And if ever they do, what a mess, for there are so many more of them than of us!

Is it just that farmers must wait for a war to bring them prosperity? Is it just that some men get large salaries for almost nothing but to have their names on some letter-head, while others slave their lives away on the ragged edges of dire poverty? And I say that we must learn the way of justice. Every sharecropper, every coal miner, every neglected child, every underprivileged person—all these add up to trouble unless we find the ways of righteousness. Is it right that I should live on the borders of gluttony while millions face starvation in Europe and in the Orient? When will we learn that justice is the first requirement of God?

*"Love Mercy"*

BUT here we come to a difficulty, for absolute justice is beyond man's ability. Job put it well when he said, "How should man be just with God?" Again Job said, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me." This

is well illustrated in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. Shylock maneuvered Antonio into promising a pound of flesh if he failed to pay what was due. According to law, this was just. But Portia pointed out that some other things had to be considered apart from mere justice as such.

*For as thou urgest justice, be assured  
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.*

She urged Shylock to take his pound of flesh, but Shylock was to shed no drop of blood. That would have been beyond justice. He was to take a pound of flesh, not one whit more or less. A surgeon was to be on hand to see to it that Antonio would not bleed to death. If Shylock failed in these, then he was to become liable for his goods, and even for his life. But more. Justice must rest on exact truth. Shylock did not care for the pound of flesh. What he wanted was to get his enemy, Antonio, out of the way; and this would have been a heinous crime. This is the story of those who would be just, and only just. Justice to be just at all must be tempered with mercy. Justice without mercy is the most monstrous thing in the world. There is no evil quite so evil as that which poses as the good. So the second requirement of God is that man love mercy. As Portia puts it:

*And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice.*

The ones who gain the most from life are those who have gone beyond the demands of justice. A great Negro singer, whose mother had been a slave, became very successful. He had sung before royalty. The master and the mistress of his mother fell on unfortunate ways and were in danger of losing their home. The singer went to their home. Old Missus was sick. The Negro gave lavishly of

his money to the ones who had once enslaved his mother. The home was saved. The singer went beyond the demands of justice in the right direction. Such actions as this will tend to go far in solving the problems of race. What a world if men lived mercifully!

But again, a problem. It is sometimes very hard to know the merciful thing to do. Rome doled out corn until her citizenry became weak and flabby. Shall I give money to every beggar who may ask for it? Shall I shield my child because I love him? Nay, our very intentions to do good to mankind may be man's downfall. The beggar may always remain a beggar if he can get easy money. My child may become a misfit for the rest of his life if I shield him too much, for the world into which children are thrust is a hard world, a world that demands strong men and women. I think it was Theodore Roosevelt who said something like this: "There is no question that the world suffers much from hard-heartedness, but it suffers more from soft-headedness." And so—

*"Walk Humbly With Thy God"*

FOR I do not know how to temper justice with mercy. Neither do I know what is truly merciful. How desperately we need God at this point. For God knows. It is here that we find the thing that ties life together and makes it livable. Salt is composed of two deadly poisons. Together in right proportions they become safe and necessary to life. So with justice and mercy. Either one alone is unsafe as a way to live. Justice must be tempered with mercy, and mercy must be made vigorous with justice. I cannot make the combination, but God can. And if I walk with him, I'll know the secret too; that is, as much as I need to know of it. Walking with him I find a solution to the problems of life; the burdens of life become bearable and all of life tends to be set to music.

For walking with God, humbly, is more than humiliating; it is the most exalting experience that man can ever know. God is still, as for Israel, a high God, and to walk with him is a thrilling experience. It lifts the soul. It fills life with zest and glory. Two men were walking sadly one day. Their best friend had died as a common criminal. They had counted so much on him, but he was gone. Suddenly a stranger came alongside. He walked and talked with them, infusing meaning and beauty into their tragedy. He was the very person whom they were mourning, but they knew it not. Later on, when they thought it over, when they became sure that they had walked with their risen Lord, with God himself, they said: "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?"

And this is our supreme need today; this is what the Lord requires: "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

# *Power for Christian Living*

S. LOREN BOWMAN

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*Acts 1:8-9; 3:16; Colossians 3:12-14*

WE live in an age of power. New all-time high records are being established in the realms of physical and chemical power. We are left under the impression that our present achievements are mere beginnings in a universe of unfolding energy. Indeed, it appears that we live in a universe of unlimited power.

Unfortunately these daily demonstrations of power are largely in the material realm—rarely is the power of the human spirit highlighted in the headlines. And so a shiver of fear goes over the whole world; there is a general feeling that we lack men of moral and spiritual strength to turn the great discoveries of science into benefits for mankind.

This puts Christians on the spot! For our faith says that God is the final power in the world. He is the Creator and the Keeper of life. And in his position of unlimited vision he knows what he is doing. Moreover, our faith says that spiritual power is stronger than physical power. That which lifts us up is stronger than that which pulls us down! Therefore, good is final in the universe.

Love, mind, spirit—these are the strongest forces of life. So our faith says that persons represent the highest concern of God and that all the world's resources are intended for the enrichment of the human spirit.

Why, then, are we so far advanced in the physical sciences and so poorly developed in the resources of the spirit? Why do we have atomic energy without spiritual giants to use it for the good of mankind? This is the dilemma of Christians! So we ask: "Is there power for Christian living? Or is Christian living an impossible adventure? Are the Christian ideals just idle dreams? Are the hidden forces of the spirit unable to match the powers of evil in our modern world? Is God unable to raise up children worthy of his name?"

#### *Power Is Available*

It is my conviction that power is available for Christian living. A Spirit-filled life cannot be matched by any form of physical power. God is able to raise up children who are living examples of wholeness and health.

I believe these things because of what I see in the life of Christ. He loved; he served; he sacrificed—as no man before or since. He was pure, unselfish, forgiving. And no power released in life has equaled his influence upon the lives of men. Indeed, he remains the spiritual giant. In his presence, many found their lives being made rich and full. The blind saw. The deaf heard. The lepers were cleansed. The insane were restored. The defeated found hope. Yes, the power of the spirit is the superior, redeeming power.

"But," you say, "Jesus was a special case—a unique Man!" Granted! And then you add: "His power is not for us." I answer: "It is!" The resources of God are available to us on the same terms. The power of the spirit is for Christian living in our day. Why, this is the

meaning of Jesus—the very purpose of the incarnation—the power of God in human life. “As many as receive him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God.”

The first Christians took this promise at its face value. Following Pentecost they began to overpower the world. These untrained disciples—the ones who had denied, doubted and forsaken Jesus—became men of spiritual power. They healed the sick; they cured broken souls. They shared all they possessed—demonstrating love in their human relationships. Indeed, they had power for their daily living.

And it did not vanish with the coming of hard days. They were persecuted: whipped, jailed, stoned. Later they were beheaded, fed to hungry lions or burned at the stake. But nothing stopped them! The spiritual force of their lives was superior to the might of Rome. And their faith spread over the whole world. The promise of Jesus, “Ye shall receive power,” was realized in their lives.

You say, “But that’s a long way off. Certainly this power is not for us.” Yes, it is! We have our spiritual giants: Niemoeller in Germany; Vernier in Belgium; Schweitzer in Africa; Gandhi in India; Koo in China; Kagawa in Japan. Some in every land find power for the Christian quest.

Why do all Christians not have this power? Why are not all Christians radiant and irresistible? Is God’s power not for all? Is there some magical formula that is denied us? Indeed not! Power comes into human life by eternal laws. And these laws are more simple than we imagine. Our difficulty is in applying the laws. Of course, we cannot fully understand the ways of God; “we see through a glass darkly.” Yet we can see the processes by which spiritual power comes into human life.



*Conditions of Power*

POWER for Christian living grows out of harmony with God. Our lives come from God. Our spirits are made for fellowship with his spirit. We need to be at-one with God; we want our heartbeat tuned to his heart of eternal love.

The Old Testament said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . soul, . . . strength, . . . mind." That is, God must be the central affection of your whole life. The New Testament put it this way: "Surrender to God 'and let the peace of God rule in your hearts.'" Until we surrender there can be no peace. We will lack power until we are at peace with him who is the Source of all spiritual power.

This surrender must be made fruitful through cultivation, contemplation and fellowship. It is really no wonder we have so little power: we spend such a little time in the direct cultivation of the Spirit of God—a few minutes a day, an hour on Sunday—then we wonder why we are not spiritual giants.

What did the government do when it wanted to develop atomic energy? It employed the best scientists; it set aside the best equipment; it provided unlimited resources. And it kept the men at the job continuously—urging them to exhaust every possible clue and to perform every conceivable experiment. Spiritual energy requires the same discipline. We must keep ourselves at our best; we must carry on endless experiments; we must desire the good life above everything else. Spiritual power will not be ours until we make Christian living our central passion.

Christ is the key to this harmony with God. He is the master chord, the pattern we must adopt. Said he: "I and my Father are one. . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life, and

no man cometh to the Father, but by me." Peter says of one who found wholeness through faith in Christ: "It is by his power and through faith in him that this man whom you see and recognize has been made strong again, and it is faith inspired by him that has given this man the perfect health you all see."\* This man of health can be any man who puts his life in harmony with God. And any man who fails to make his peace with God is living against life. He is out of harmony, and therefore is without spiritual power.

Power for Christian living also grows out of harmony with our fellows. This is the contribution of New Testament living. This is the second commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If we are out of harmony with others, life is without spiritual power. Even the peace of God is not assured until the conditions of harmony with our fellows are fulfilled. "You cannot love God whom you have not seen, if you do not love your brother whom you have seen."

Our doctors and psychologists are piling up mounds of evidence which reveal that health and vitality disappear whenever anger, jealousy, and resentments are nursed in our hearts. Our spirits are poisoned whenever we become partners to hatred or to ill will. It is no mystery, then, that we have lost the joy, the radiance, and the power of the first Christians. For many modern Christians have succumbed to campaigns of hatred during two world wars in one generation. Many others hold grudges and resentments toward their neighbors, thereby breaking the fellowship of the church. Still again we separate ourselves into classes and races, thereby breaking the design for brotherhood. The power of God will not come into our

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\*Acts 3:16. J. W. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Bible, An American Translation*. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press

lives until we overcome these barriers between ourselves and our fellows.

Paul puts it in this fashion: "As persons chosen by God, then, consecrated and dearly loved, you must clothe yourselves with tenderness of heart, kindness, humility, gentleness, forbearance. You must bear with one another and forgive one another—just as the Lord has forgiven, so you must forgive. And over all these put on love, which completes them and fastens them together."\* We cannot laugh off these demands if we want the power life is supposed to have. For power of the spirit belongs to those who live in harmony with God and their fellows. There is no other way.

### *Power Through Redemptive Service*

AGAIN power for Christian living issues from dedication to a life of redemptive service.

You remember the inasmuch parables of the judgment. You recall the words of Jesus: "Whosoever will save his life will lose it. If any man will come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me." Every Christian is aware that the cross is central in our faith. It is suffering love. It is accepted voluntarily for the sake of others. It becomes, in its turn, the source of our power.

Then it is no wonder we lack power for our Christian living. We have been selfish when the way of God is sacrificial service. We have gone after the best jobs. We have determined to get ahead regardless of what it does to the other fellow. We have used about all of our time to further our own causes. We have forgotten that the cross is a principle of life as well as a symbol of salvation.

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\*Col. 3:12-14. J. W. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Bible, An American Translation*. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press

Once a lecture on the masterpieces of art was being given by the aid of a stereopticon. When the picture of Holman Hunt's Christ the Light of the World was flashed on the screen, a deathly silence crept over the audience. Finally the silence was broken by the shrill voice of a little lad: "Daddy, why don't they let Christ in?" He whispered: "I don't know." Soon the little voice was heard again: "Daddy, I know why they don't let him in—they live in the basement and can't hear him knock."

As long as we live by our own selfish desires, we are living in the basement of life. Christ cannot get in, and we cannot have the power of his spirit for our living, for the power of God comes only to those who dedicate themselves to a life of redemptive service.

Yes, God's power is available for Christian living today. The Christian life is not an impossible dream. We can live by the power of the Holy Spirit. And this power comes into life by understandable laws: There must be harmony between ourselves and God. There must be harmony between ourselves and our fellows. There must be dedication of life to redemptive service. When we fulfill these conditions, we will realize the power of God for victorious living.

# *Clothed, Cleansed and Commissioned*

CHARLES L. COX

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*Clothed, and in his right mind (Luke 8:35)*

THROUGH a little crevice in the volcanic rock, just wide enough to admit a man's body, we descended a narrow rustic ladder for twelve feet into the cavern of an extinct hot spring, now called The Devil's Kitchen. It was a bowl-shaped room hollowed out of the rock. From this room another crevice, too small to enter, led down into intense darkness. We were in the channel of what was once a roaring, seething, spouting geyser. But today one can enter that underground chamber and be impressed with the stillness and peace that pervade it. How would one proceed to quiet one of the great geysers? How could he tame Old Faithful of Yellowstone Park? One stands entranced at the marvels of nature fashioned by the great Creator's hand, so manifest in the world about us, and is thrilled at the display of his power. But his work on the hearts and in the lives of men is even more impressive and far-reaching in its results.

There was in the country of the Gadarenes a man who was a raving, foaming maniac, naked, devil-possessed, a menace to himself, to his family and to society in general.

One day, in great distress, he was crying and cutting himself with stones. Then Jesus came that way and everything was changed. The great Master of men having compassion on him in his wretched condition, spoke the word that "set the captive free," brought peace and quiet to his soul, restored him to his right mind and gave him back to his friends. The demons were gone and the clothes went on. He was a transformed being. Instead of an untamable monster he became a valuable witness to publish to the world the power of the Lord and to "shew how great things God had done unto him."

### *A World in Confusion*

THIS graphic incident finds its counterpart in the times in which we live, when multitudes are in distress, confusion and turmoil. In fact, many parts of the world today can be likened to a devil's kitchen, sadly in need of a voice charged with supernatural power, unparalleled energy and divine authority, to speak peace and quiet to the souls of men. Perilous times are upon us; there is "distress of nations, . . . men's hearts failing them for fear." We plan, we hope, we pray, but still we are concerned about "what a day may bring forth."

Jesus tells the story of a man out of whom a demon was cast. Seemingly nothing constructive had been put in its place. Very soon the demon returned, found the house "empty, swept and garnished." Here was reformation without regeneration. The demon saw that here was a very desirable base from which to operate; so, "taking seven other spirits more wicked than himself, they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be with this wicked generation."

Out of our world, active, organized, destructive war has been cast; no longer are bombs rained from the skies on

helpless men, women and children; no longer are torpedoes sent on their deadly course through the deep; no longer giant war tanks rumbling across country and through city streets, crushing human bodies under their iron tread. But since the demon war has been cast out, what shall take its place? Military conscription? Atomic bombs in preparation? A nation armed to the teeth? These look like first cousins to the demon war that has just been cast out. Can a great nation, born in earnest prayer to an omnipotent God, having as its birthplace the "city of brotherly love," established on the principles of civil and religious liberty, and with these great endowments as its birthright, moving forward under the favor of heaven for one hundred seventy years, to prosper and become the greatest nation on God's green earth—can such a nation find nothing better to take the place of the demon war than conscripted boys, atomic bombs and death-dealing battleships? Shall we turn from our "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" to follow in the sordid trail of an Alexander, a Mussolini, a Hitler or a Hirohito? Or shall we go forward more definitely than ever before, in the name and power of the Lord of Hosts?

### *Man Groping for the Way Out*

OUR young people and adults, as well as leaders of nations, are groping for a way out of the confusion. Is there a way out? Is there an "anointment of eyesalve" whereby we may be able to pierce the clouds, see through and understand more clearly God's beneficent program for the great world? Yes, and we, individually and collectively, have traveled that road. Our nation during the years past has journeyed that way, proved its safety, demonstrated its advantages and durability. It is the way of our glorious Christ, for he alone is the way, the truth, the life.

This story of the demented man of Gadara is a wonderful picture of the valley of suffering through which our world has been passing in these momentous days, and of the remarkable deliverance which has been provided in the person of the great Redeemer. After the terrific explosion of falling bombs, the crash of scattered debris, the terrifying glare of burning homes and business blocks, the pathetic wail of crying children left without homes or parents—after all of this we can have that joy of soul, that “peace that passeth understanding” that comes only as a result of our complete abiding in him. A little lad clasped to his mother’s breast on one of those terrifying nights whispered, “Mommy, I can feel your heart beating.” Blessed is that individual or people who live so close to the Christ as to feel his great heart throb of love.

### *Christ the Only Hope*

THE history of the human race, which sums up the experience of past ages, should teach us that Christ is the only hope in dealing with racial and national animosities, for in him there is neither black nor white, yellow nor red, bond nor free; for that he “hath made of one blood all nations of men.” Education, peace conferences, inter-racial discussions tending to a better understanding of problems have their place, and their value is not to be minimized in the matter of clearing up difficult situations; but they are entirely inadequate when it comes to dealing with the root of the trouble, which is sin in the human heart, for the “heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.”

Some of the underlying causes of strife between classes, races and nations are misunderstanding, suspicion, pride, selfishness, and greed for things, place or power. Efforts toward a better understanding can sometimes remove prejudice and suspicion, but only the Spirit of Christ can



transform the heart and replace pride, selfishness and greed with unselfishness, love and true humility. Therefore the missionary effort of the Christian church has ever been and will continue to be the greatest factor in combating strife and confusion, thus bringing man to the place where he will be freed from the bondage of things, learn to hold lightly earth's treasures and build a more abundant life on the eternal verities.

Cicero, the great Roman orator and statesman in the long ago, said, "The diseases of the mind are more numerous and destructive than those of the body." And E. Stanley Jones of our own day says, "We pass our mental and spiritual sicknesses to our bodies." In other words, we pass our mental and spiritual illness on to the physical, which in turn reaches out into the great world with an influence and resulting effect that is very detrimental. We were created in the image of God, and our bodies, which are carnal, are in many respects not unlike those of animals. But that which raises us infinitely above the animal is the mind and spirit; the power to think God's thoughts after him; the emotions and feelings, consciousness of self; and the sovereign will.

We were made to love, serve and glorify our Creator and Redeemer by being a blessing and benediction to our fellow men. It was intended that we find our supreme health, happiness, spiritual growth and usefulness in these capacities. Therefore, only as men and women come to know and receive Christ as Savior and walk with God, in whose image they were made, can they experience in their own lives and demonstrate to the world real peace and unhindered joy, as well as material and spiritual prosperity.

### *Our Challenge*

Now let us remember that while we may have heard

Jesus say, "Come," this is not the only word of importance in the spiritual vocabulary, for we discover that after the gracious invitation that called the disciples from their boats, their nets and their taxgathering, he gave them a course of instruction, breathed upon them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," and then said, "Go." And that one little word go, spoken on Mount Olivet almost two thousand years ago, continues to be more vital, more powerful, more dynamic than all the words spoken by the so-called great men of the ages. If we have heard and accepted his invitation to come, may we also hear and take seriously his command to go.

There are still vast territories where the "glad tidings of great joy" have never been heard; many parts of the world are still in darkness; many souls are still "in the tombs," demon-possessed, waiting for that voice of authority that will set them free. Here is a great challenge to the young people of our day to be the Lord's ambassadors and pioneer in the many countries and islands of the sea that have lately been opened, in which the way has been cleared for the gospel message. Will we gladly and courageously respond with the words, "Here am I, Lord; send me"?

The last picture we have of the demented man of Gadara is a most beautiful one, and if I were an artist I would find great delight in putting it on canvas. I see him sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed in body, cleansed in mind and spirit, pleading that he might go with his Lord, to be by his side always. But the great Master of men said, "No, return to your own people and 'shew how great things God hath done unto thee.' Go be a witness and publish abroad the gospel of divine grace." Clothed, cleansed and commissioned, he was ready to go.

May the heavenly Father hasten the day when this old

world shall be clothed, cleansed, fed and commissioned, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," when swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, and when men shall learn the art of war no more.

*Thy witness in the souls of men,  
The Spirit's ceaseless, brooding power,  
In lands where shadows hide the light,  
Await a new creative hour;  
O Mighty God, set us aflame  
To show the glory of thy Name.*

# *On Holy Ground*

B. WAYNE CRIST

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*And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground (Exodus 3:5)*

THE one thing our age is lacking is the sense of standing on holy ground. We do not realize that man belongs not to himself, but to God. This is an age in which man has become the standard of his own judgment, and the possibility of the mind of man to fathom every secret of the universe has been assumed, not only by the scientist, but also by those who would be builders of Christian character. In the glib utterance that there is nothing good in the universe which is not good for man, we have thrown away the sense of a supernatural overarching of a will which is not our own.

This was never more clearly revealed in our national life than on the days of victory following the war, when most of the American people, instead of falling on their knees to ask the guidance of God in the days ahead, resorted to pagan celebrations and bacchanalian orgies. True, there were prayers mingled with the hilarity; but they were prayers in which we assumed that we had

saved America for God, and that once again the forces of goodness had been snatched away in a mere nick of time from the evil forces which threatened to overwhelm them. We assumed that our powers were necessary for good to prosper and that we were the indispensable rescuers of God's purpose on earth.

Thus holiness of life has been placed under the aegis of man instead of man walking under the holiness of God. And while it is true that we recognize in a vague way that there is a God who has created life, we do not live with the true faith that we belong not to ourselves, but to the God who holds every answer of man's existence.

"So what!" says he who sees no need of a rule of the will of God in his heart. "Are we not adequate to take care of our own affairs? In a time like ours we have found the way to certainty by searching for the facts of existence and have displaced the need of faith in God by an approach to truth in which man has discovered his own unlimited possibilities of creativity. Man now has power to take care of himself. The need of treading as though on holy ground was for an age of ignorance when we had to walk cautiously for fear of making a mistake. But not so for our time."

It is interesting, however, that even in the midst of the most extreme kind of self-confidence there crops out here and there the feeling that life is not offering the most nearly perfect satisfaction. In at least three ways we can discover that man, under the cloak of a reliance on his own superiority, betrays the fact that he needs something other than the thought that he is master of his own existence.

### I

THE first of these betrayals is pressed home for us in the undercurrent reactions to the attitudes which have

developed regarding the pursuit of the good life. In this ultrascientific era there has constantly been thrown out the appeal to everyone that we must pursue with our deepest devotion the truth, which should at last make us free. Thus the romantic search or quest for truth took the place of the need for a sense of holiness in life. Since man no longer felt that he needed God to reign supreme in his life, there of necessity had to be something to take its place. So in a kind of lathering of his own dreams, man began to worship those unseen ideals which were the spinnings of his own mind. Man's religion became his attitude toward his work, or vocation, and the result has been that we have reaped a self-centered and sensuous culture. The counterpart of this same attitude found its focus in corporate life in the nationalisms which have in the last few hundred years served as man's other religion.

This substitution for holiness in life has not by any means given us the desired results. In reality it is not a substitution, but only a subtle kind of projection which has been nothing more than man trying to control himself with his own power. We have done what Alexander Pope, an English poet of the eighteenth century, said we must do:

*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan:  
The proper study of mankind is man.*

And the results we have achieved have been similar to those which Pope himself achieved, for in a letter to John Gay he made this cynical estimate of life: "Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed." Just so, ours is an age which is beginning to expect nothing from life, for centering our attention upon ourselves has caused us literally to go insane. Having lost sight of the fact that we belong to God, we have simultaneously

lost sight of the fundamental purpose for which we live.

Francis Thompson, the great Roman Catholic poet of recent times, the very breath of whose life was the heart of the Christian faith, wrote that there is a "traitorous trueness" in nature which is not to be defied. Man, in the process of turning to look within himself to find the core of life's truth, has found that his nature is traitorously true, for man's nature was made for God's holiness and it is restless until man falls upon his knees to recognize that he treads on holy ground.

Thus it was not strange that the editors of *Fortune* magazine a few years ago were asking for a voice of authority to speak above the wilderness of voices which were mere echoes of human opinions. We had relied upon our own confidence and power, but suddenly we began to realize that the bottom had dropped from our once-comfortable dwellings and that we had no foundations to hold us secure in the winds which blow where they list.

When the holiness is drained from life, when man no longer feels he belongs to God, he must rely on some kind of substitute, but it betrays him in the end.

## II

Not only is man's reliance on his own capabilities doomed to betray him, but it also proves to be of no value in times of stress. The stories of men who turned to God during the war are testimonies of this fact. When their own weapons and means had deserted them, and when they had been thrown to the mercy of nature—sometimes on a craft at sea or sometimes marooned far away on some tiny island—then they were startled by the paucity of their own power to save themselves. Suddenly the externals of life were thrown off, the false mask of human

pride was torn from the face of reality, the awful loneliness of a man without God pierced like a knife to the heart of human selfishness. Lips that had never before prayed began to breathe prayers of simple faith and of childlike trust to God as their only hope. With the psalmist they began to cry:

*Out of the depths have I cried unto thee,  
O Jehovah.*

*Lord, hear my voice:*

*Let thine ears be attentive*

*To the voice of my supplications.*

There is a story told of a ship which had been damaged in fighting. It was expected to break apart in the middle within a few hours. The captain instructed each man aboard to get a piece of wood from the ship large enough to keep himself afloat on the water. Then he called the men together and said a simple prayer which went something like this: "Help us to know that we are in thy hands and help us to know thy will."

This is not a story of an isolated nature, but it is a parable of what recurs again and again in the course of human affairs. Men brought to the extremity of their own resources for saving themselves almost instinctively awoken with a start to discover that they stand on holy ground and that in their ultimate reference they are not their own, but God's.

Thus it was not strange, it was not an act of hypocrisy, it was not a thing to be jeered at, that when the mighty Titanic began to sink, the band turned from jazz to play Nearer, My God, to Thee. It is only to be expected that when men are suddenly brought face to face with stern reality they begin to search for faith in something beyond the natural phenomenon which surrounds them.



It would seem that the time is now ripe for us to realize the impotency of our own efforts, but apparently our time has not yet been fulfilled. We are standing on holy ground and we know it not.

### III

WE have in recent months gone a step further in our realization that man is without hope when he relies on his own powers. We have discovered that a false self-confidence in the end betrays our faith. Men have been forced to the realization that they must ultimately rely upon God. Now we are coming to the conclusion that the deepest wisdom man has discovered is that he belongs not to himself, but to God. It is now beginning to be recognized by some of the best scientific minds of our day that the very epitome of wisdom is reached not so much when man has discovered all the facts of existence, but when he declares his faith that God is the ruler of life. The old Hebrew adage, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," is being realized anew.

Thus it is not strange that men of science, the very men who gave us the atomic bomb, are now proclaiming a gospel. They have turned to religion as an ally in their endeavors to keep man from destroying himself. They have approached a fervor which is almost evangelistic. Science is no longer the enemy of religion; it is no longer our competitor; it is turning to the church for help in its crusade.

In this age we have thought that man's salvation lay in training the mind and sharpening its skills until all men became such experts in their lines of work that a perfect society would result. The perfecting of the mind and the eliminating of ignorance were to usher in the abundant life. Getting knowledge was the principal thing. Certainly these things have not been without their results,

for we have tapped unlimited resources of power and technique. We have been successful in that we have achieved in one area what we set out to do.

But it is now time for men of wisdom to grow wiser and know that he who seeks first the kingdom of God is the one who has comprehended the greatest truth, the eternal truth which shall not be broken.

Men cannot love or respect their fellow men or themselves, nor can they create a world of peace, except as they come to recognize that they must worship as on holy ground. We have passed through an era in which man idolized himself and we are reaping the harvest. We cannot continue as we have gone, for new catastrophes are awaiting us. And if it should be so that the threatening times in which we now live prove to be the beginning of another age of darkness, new light will dawn, as indeed it dawned for the Israelites in Egypt, when future wanderers turn aside, as did Moses, and discover that the ground whereon they stand is really holy ground.

# *The Gospel of the Second Mile*

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*And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile,  
go with him two (Matthew 5:41)*

THE gospel of the second mile is either an insight into the nature of reality, or it is the vague imagining of some romantic idealist. Jesus makes only one direct reference to the second mile in all his utterances, but Dorothy Clarke Wilson, in her novel, *The Brother*, retells the basic story as it may have happened in Jesus' own boyhood days.\*

One hot day, Jesus and his brother, James, were walking down the road to Sepphoris, where some carpenter work awaited them. They were carrying not only their boxes of tools, but also packages of food and clothing.

About a mile out of town, they overtook a Roman soldier, who was carrying a heavy pack. Upon seeing the two boys, he shouted, "Here, you tall fellow." James knew what was coming and his fist clenched; but Jesus turned to the soldier, and, shifting his own burden, put the soldier's pack upon his own back.

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\*Dorothy Clarke Wilson, *The Brother*, copyright MCMXLIV by the Westminster Press, Philadelphia, pp. 86-88

James was not only hot now; he was seething. He was almost as angry at Jesus as he was at the law which gave a Roman the privilege of commanding the services of a Jew for a mile. He was angry at Jesus because he acted as if he were enjoying it.

At the end of the first mile, James offered to take the extra burden from Jesus. Jesus said nothing and only shook his head. Then, all at once, the soldier was no longer the burly, arrogant Roman officer, but a big, overgrown, homesick boy, and he talked of his father and his mother, and of the girl he wanted to marry.

The end of the second mile brought them to the gate of Sepphoris. There the soldier took his pack from Jesus, stood uncertainly for a moment, said, "Maybe I can do something for you some day," and walked quickly toward Herod's palace.

WE are fascinated by this story because we realize that here we have come to grips with that which is vital and compelling, that here we are dealing with an aspect of practical Christian living. Let us see why this is true.

First of all, in the gospel of the second mile Jesus shows us how to meet the duties and compulsions of life. The meeting of life's compulsions and duties is a very relevant problem, for who is there among us who is not confronted with the compulsions of a workaday world?

Everywhere we turn, we meet some sort of compelling duty, and the way in which we meet these calls of duty may have a great influence upon the course of our lives. There is no limit to those compulsions which limit us and hedge us about. There is the necessity of earning a livelihood; there are the responsibilities of home life and parenthood; there are civic duties with respect to the planning and governing of community life.

All of these and more force upon us a pattern of duties and compulsions. In this respect all men are equal. There is no escape from them. They are the first mile.

THE first mile is the mile of duty, and we live in the first mile because life demands that we live there or else cease to exist. Physical life depends upon the compulsion of breathing. No one forces us to breathe, but if we choose not to breathe, then life soon passes from us. The maintenance of a home depends upon the assumption of certain tasks and responsibilities. The maintenance of a strong preaching program demands that a pastor spend many hours each week in his study. The national state says that there are certain duties and tasks which we owe to the state.

Now there are several ways in which we can face these duties of life, the first mile in which we live.

Of course, there is the growl-and-grumble method, characterized by these familiar words, "The world owes me a living." Thousands of people live this way, their eyes on the time clock, and the hours drag by endlessly. For them there is no zest in life.

Then there are the tit-for-tat'ers. These folks accept their duties as a matter of course, never giving more than they receive. They follow the Hebrew law of an "eye for an eye." From them come no extra deeds which would serve as lubricating oil for the pistons of life. Jesus told about some servants like this, who, although they had fulfilled their obligations by plowing in the field from morning till night, yet deserved no thanks at all. Says Jesus, "When ye shall have done all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do.'" Merely doing one's duty is what Jesus calls unprofitable.

The final way to accept duty is the way we choose, not because we must, but because we desire it. That is the gospel of the second mile.

THE second mile is the mile in which we walk by choice, it is where love and kindness are found, and it is where we find that true happiness. We do not find any individuals in the second mile who are not there by choice, and no one can force any other person to take the way of the second mile. In making that deliberate choice, we often discover that the very limitations of life often provide for us our most glorious opportunities.

Little did John Bunyan think when they threw him into the Bedford jail that he would be a second-miler. Duty demanded that he sit in a jail cell, but rather than merely accepting his miserable life, he had a glorious vision of the pathway a Christian climbs, and Pilgrim's Progress was the result of his doing more than was required of him.

Those who have a curdled-milk disposition and long faces are not the second-milers. You can tell a second-miler by looking into his face, whereon the sunshine glow of his soul within is reflected.

One of the most beautiful sights in the world is a second-mile home, where each mate seeks to outdo the other in deeds of love and kindness. Children who are raised in such a home grow to manhood and womanhood knowing the power of love and kindness, and the only way to check the rising tide of divorce is to make more second-mile homes.

Do you remember how Saul, in his anger and attempts to kill David, made one last attempt to search out and slay David? Saul took three thousand men with him and one night he chanced to sleep in a cave where David and his

men had taken refuge. David's friends said, "This is your chance." But David chose the second mile, and only cut a piece from Saul's coat. When Saul realized what had happened, he said to David, "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil." Love and kindness often win where all else fails.

Why did we receive so much joy and happiness in packing the Christmas boxes for European Christians? Nobody told us that we must, but it was a genuine privilege because we knew that it lay within the realm of the second mile. There is a certain church where each family "adopts" a family in Europe, and sends a box of food monthly to that family. Would not that be a great project for the Church of the Brethren?

All of our giving to the church should be second-mile giving. If we give because we feel that we are obliged to give, there is no joy in it. The real blessing comes when we give because we want to feel ourselves a vital part of the extension of the church into the world.

THE second mile is often a lonely pathway, but, in the end, it is the only one by which men can achieve the full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

One who walks the second mile must have courage and faith. It is the way of most resistance. It often means the loss of friends, alienation of one's own family, loss of status. It means going against public opinion, enduring the possibility of malicious gossip. One of the glorious aspects of the last few years has been the sight of those who have walked the second mile. There was George, for instance.

George had a fine wife and a lovely little girl. They were a model family. I had helped bring them into our

church. They were fine, upstanding Christian people. There was only one point of difference between them and a family like yours and mine. Their skin was a different color; they were Japanese Americans.

George was classified 1-A in the draft, but because he believed that military service was contrary to the teachings of Jesus he refused to be inducted. After much delay and many trials, George was finally sentenced to prison. The authorities refused to let him serve in a way which befitted his conscience, even though one of the best lawyers in Chicago told me that his case was unconstitutional. George is in that prison today, but his spirit is radiant and beautiful. Listen to an extract from a letter which I received from him recently: "I have more than exceeded my one-third sentence and it becomes more apparent each day that a second mile is being demanded. . . . Notwithstanding this and many other apparently discouraging elements, I find myself quite happy and sincerely feel that it is God who is helping me to transcend life's pressing issues. I am grateful that I am able to attribute my physical and spiritual well-being to him who is ever merciful and understanding and loving." Those words are of the essence of sainthood.

THE second mile is the mile of prayer. George is praying for the men who put him in prison. Paul prayed for the Jews when they had thrown him out of their synagogues; and when they had beaten, starved and all but killed him, he could say, "I could wish myself accursed for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh. My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved."

Jesus' first-mile duty was to live for men. But he said, "I'm going to do more; I'm going to die for men." Then



he prayed on Calvary for the men who put him there.

The second mile means that we pray on our Calvaries for the people who put us there. It is the only way to bring repentance in the hearts of those who have wronged us.

THE second mile is the only sound basis for dealings with other individuals and for dealings between nations, because it is indeed a part of ultimate reality and truth.

A great English Bible scholar has written this commentary concerning the Sermon on the Mount: "It is necessary in this connection to remind ourselves once again that these laws are the laws of the kingdom, that is to say, they are applicable within the realm of those who are submitted to the kingship of Christ. To apply them promiscuously to the rebellious may be to encourage that which is not true, and to violate justice."

In my notebook containing this statement, I have written a question mark and, "Is that so?" Is the gospel only for members of the kingdom, for Christians? Was Jesus speaking to a Christian congregation when he told them about the second mile? Are his teachings applicable only to his followers? If our faith in Christ and his teachings is no deeper than that, then we have no faith at all.

If we are to believe the author of this statement, we might as well say that Christ's death is apropos only to Christians, that it has no meaning for the sinner. To say that would negate the central meaning of the gospel. Rather, the laws of the kingdom apply to every individual, every nation, wherever men meet the problems of life. The gospel of the second mile is applicable to everyone, everywhere, in all phases of life.

The world of the future, its safety, its steady march toward the good, its peace, rests upon the shoulders of men

like John Bunyan, like George, Paul and Jesus Christ. It rests upon those who have walked the second mile. James thought that Jesus' generosity had gone to seed, but discovered later that there was eternal significance in the second mile.

Call the roll of the world's great spiritual heroes. There is not a single-mile man among them. All of them are second-milers. To be a Christian should also mean that one is a second-miler. One of the greatest challenges offered to us is to live, not in the first mile of duty, but in the second mile of choice. One walks alone in the first mile, but when one treads the second mile, Christ walks with him.

# *Man and the Eternal God*

IRA H. FRANTZ

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*Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth;  
for I am God, and there is none else (Isaiah 45:22)*

WHAT do we mean when we use the term *God*? I am not now interested in any comprehensive theological definition, but only with the common concept of God, a sort of minimum content of the idea conveyed by the term. Ask the man on the street what he understands by *God*. He will tell you, "God is the Creator." Or he will tell you that God is almighty or that God is good. Most people, whether they identify themselves with religion or not, believe that there is a God, and whether they think of him as a superman or a spirit, they attribute to him great power, goodness, and the act of creation.

Taking this common concept of God as sufficient, I should like to explore with you first the meaning of this simplest concept and then consider three very practical implications of such a concept for the everyday life of every man. I assume that there is not one of us but believes in God and believes at least this much about him.

Now if God created the heavens and the earth he ought to know pretty much how they are put together. A man

was telling me that he built his house with his own hands and knows every detail of its construction. So the Creator knows his universe. Astronomers have learned much about the heavenly bodies. But the Creator must know the answers to the thousand questions astronomers ask and cannot answer. Chemists have learned much about matter but the Creator must know not only the what, but also the how and the why, of every chemical reaction. Scientists exult in having learned to split an atom; but lo, all these years the Creator has been doing that and we have basked in the life-giving warmth and energy of the process ninety-three million miles away. The biologist and psychologist have learned much about living organisms and the intricate functioning of the nervous system. They stand awed by the wisdom of the Designer of the human body. Science consists mainly in discovering how God put this universe together and how he makes it click. The Creator must be the Scientist supreme. Likewise, he who has lived through all the events of human history and of prehistoric times must be the Historian supreme. God is as ancient as the hills and as modern as television and the atom bomb. Man may approach but can never equal him in knowledge. If you believe in God at all you cannot believe less than this about him.

Now the wisdom that created the universe would not have done so without some plan or purpose in such creation. That could be accepted as an axiom even if there were no evidence of plan or purpose in the world as we know it.

# I

AND this leads to the first important implication of this concept of God, which is that a wise man will try to discover the purposes of God and his own place in those purposes. It is outside the scope of this discussion to in-

quire into the possibilities of finding God and knowing his will, other than to say that no one has made serious effort to do this who has not studied the Book which claims to be the Word of God and acquainted himself with the One who said that he came to make God known to men. My point now is that if there is back of this universe a Person of intelligence and power whom we call God, then such a Person is to be reckoned with. Plain common sense will lead a man to engage in a diligent quest for him and, having found him, to endeavor to conform to his pattern with scientific precision.

How careful men are about some things! The carpenter cuts his lumber to fit accurately. The mechanic adjusts the parts of your automobile with accuracy. The machine tool operator prides himself in precision to the minute fraction of a millimeter. The farmer tests his seed for germination, and pays a premium for good seed. The musician is not content to strike somewhere near the right key on the instrument. The surgeon dare not be haphazard with his scalpel. In every field except morals and religion men seek accurate, reliable information, and strive for skill in using the known laws which govern their work. One of the purposes of our school courses in science and mathematics is to teach pupils to be careful and accurate in their thinking.

In alarming contrast to all this care and precision in most of the areas of our activity, the average person, whether a church member or not, is utterly unscientific and careless in those matters of spiritual truth and moral behavior which, after all, determine the success or failure of a whole life. To live one's life out of tune with the whole universe—what better definition of failure is there than this? The practical effects of being out of tune with the Creator are seen in all the strife and turmoil of the

times. Men are careful of their lives, prolonging them as long as possible. Yet they are utterly reckless with their lives as a whole, living them to no purpose, aimless, indifferent as to the true meaning and purpose of life itself. Men seek for happiness, and disregard the laws of the Designer of their lives which alone can make them happy.

I should like to have you think of God as a fact rather than a theory. Rather than press it as an obligation I should like to have you see that simple common sense or a scientific attitude requires that this great fact of God shall enter into all our thinking and our conduct. The great weakness of the Christian church today is that church members have not recognized that the eternal God knows best in everything, and that his way of life is not only practical but is the only way that is practical. The distressing plight of today's world results from men's disregard of the laws of God, the evil being aggravated by the failure of Christians to meet evil in God's way.

Professing belief in God, the great majority of men, including many church members, take their ideals and their standards of conduct from moving pictures, magazine stories, newspaper editorials, and the people with whom they work. Nothing is so important to human life on this planet as that life be lived as the Author of life intended that it should be lived. Just as none can know chemistry as does he who formed the elements, so no one can know what is right in human behavior as does he who made man and has lived with man since his appearance on the planet. What I am trying to say is that it is only common sense to seek the way of the Lord and follow that way with precision. A young man said he recognized that a certain course was right, then added, "But I could not afford to go that way." No man can afford to go any other way!

God is a fact in our universe. His ethical laws are as well established and as uncompromising as his so-called natural laws. The person who tries to obey these laws scrupulously is not a prude; he is a scientist and an artisan. People have a fear of seeming to be religious. I wish we could abolish the word *religion* and recognize that whether we will or not we are dealing with God every day. Then we should quit fooling ourselves into thinking we can put God into a separate compartment and keep him out of sight except on Sunday. There is a true way of life. We shall have no peace in the world or in our individual lives until we find that way and live by it.

All this is not saying that we can always be absolutely certain of the right course, especially for other persons. It is saying that every sensible man will earnestly, honestly, and persistently seek to discover and follow the will of the eternal God in his own life every day.

## II

A SECOND implication of our concept of God is that we are not capable of telling the Creator how to run his universe or when he should suspend the operation of his natural laws. Many people have suffered loss of faith because they have not been able, through prayer, to obtain their desires. These desires have ranged all the way from rain for the corn crop or a sunny day for an outing to the safety of a son in battle or the prevention of war. It is not reasonable that the Creator of the universe should become the chore boy to minister to the whims of two billion selfish and self-seeking individuals. It is unthinkable that a man, with twenty, forty, eighty years of experience to his credit, should be competent to advise the eternal God either of his own needs or the needs of the world. We should hardly be able to have faith in God as

good and dependable, if the selfishness of men and the imperialism of nations did not bear their natural fruit of war.

If indeed "prayer changes things," then upon him who prays is placed a fearsome responsibility. The prayers of men are not always answered. Praise a wise and good God for that! If Eddie Rickenbacker and his three companions were saved through prayer, what is to be said of the fifth man in the party, who perished before help came? If some mothers' prayers were answered by the safe return of their sons from the war, what is to be said of those other devout mothers who also prayed and whose sons did not return? There is only one conclusion if we accept this notion that God can be coaxed by our desires. That conclusion is that God is capricious, taking delight in granting a belated and skimpy answer here and ignoring a request there. Or what shall be said of those non-believing, nonpraying mothers whose sons returned safely? A Christian father with three sons in the war never once prayed for their physical safety. His prayers were all that the sons might be kept from evil and might have inner spiritual resources equal to all their needs.

A proper appreciation of the wisdom and goodness of God would give a different character to our prayers. Instead of trying to persuade God to do what we want done, we should recognize that his kingdom and his will for men are better for us than anything we can wish for ourselves. We should seek in prayer to have our own minds and our own desires conformed to his plans. We should pray in order that we might know him better and so discover how we ourselves can be fitted into the larger plans of God. The model prayer which Jesus taught contains but one simple material request, "Give us today our daily bread." The rest of the prayer is an effort to conform



ourselves to the great will of God. This is true prayer. This kind of prayer is answered. This kind changes things, and in the way God wants them changed.

### III

THIS leads to the third implication of our concept of God. He can be trusted. Put together two facts, the fact of his perfect wisdom and the fact of his perfect goodness, and you have a basis for complete confidence.

Job expressed this confidence when he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This is a paradoxical statement. Here is where so many would-be Christians stumble. They cannot admit the cross into their thinking about God's goodness. They want to be spared suffering and unpleasantness. Why bother about God at all if he cannot or will not protect us from suffering? God's potency in the lives of men is measured by the extent to which he spares them from suffering. Because good people suffer loss, get sick, get hurt, and share the common lot of man, God is evidently unconcerned. There is no evidence that it pays to do right.

From China comes the term *rice Christians*. It means people who become Christians in order to receive food from the missionaries or to get jobs as missionaries' helpers. Job's afflictions were an answer to the devil's taunt, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" As a matter of fact, no man does serve God for naught. But the rewards of service are not so tangible and so evident that they appeal to the shallow-minded and selfish person. If it were evident that by prayer or by obedience to moral law men might avoid all grief, men's materialism and selfishness would go unchecked. The world would be full of rice Christians.

Evil stalks God's world. God cannot redeem the evil

world by exempting some of us from the consequences of that evil. He can only subject us all, impartially, to the working of his laws and to the consequences of man's freely chosen sin. Through the faithfulness of those who suffer innocently, and especially through the voluntary sharing of men's woes by men of goodwill, God seeks to redeem his world.

The Author of science knows how things work. The great Physician knows the cure for the world's suffering. The heavenly Father is able to repay a thousandfold all the hardship anyone may endure in his cause.

Do not tell me you believe in God while you are not willing to commit yourself to him, and seek his way instead of your own. You believe in a god, not in God. Men are looking for help to little gods of their own fancy, little gods who will do them personal favors. When a gull alights unexpectedly and the lives of a few men are saved by the barest margin, they proclaim the wonderful saving power of their god. All the time God is standing by, ready to give life and health and peace to all men.

God is bigger than we know. The deeper men probe into the mysteries of his universe the more they realize how unfathomable is his wisdom. Yet those who seek him find him accessible. He hears their prayers, takes them into fellowship with himself, and saves them. He does not keep them infants by sheltering them from hardship, bereavement, or death, but he does see them through all of these, including the last, and makes their lives richer and nobler because of every difficult experience.

The world is in trouble. Like a fast train that has left the track, men have disregarded the laws of their own being and of human relationships—laws that are as much a part of the created universe as the laws of physics—and the world lies wrecked and ruined. To win men back to

the way of life and give them salvation, God himself bore a cross. But neither for him nor for us is the cross the last word. Beyond the cross is life.

The time has come when men must turn their scientific genius and their capacity for accuracy to an exploration of the way of life. Scientists, statesmen, and the man on the street will find God the most significant fact with which they have to deal. There is no other. In him alone shall we find the salvation we seek.

# *The Satisfying Christ*

I. V. FUNDERBURGH

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*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33)*

IN this statement of Jesus is implied the great universal conflict in human experience—the best as against the lesser good; the high way and the low way; the way of Christ and peace and the way of the world and trouble. The word *tribulation* in the original text means pressure, anguish, trouble. That is what the world offers. Christ and his way offer peace of mind and soul, good cheer, joy, freedom, hope, salvation.

A missionary in India was preaching one day beside the river. Among those who came to bathe in the sacred stream was a man who had traveled on his knees and elbows from a great distance with the pain of conviction in his heart. He hoped that by washing in the Ganges he might find relief for his troubled spirit. He dragged himself to the river's edge and crept in. A few moments later he emerged with the old pain still tugging at his heart. He lay prostrate on the bank in utter despair. Presently

he heard the voice of the missionary. He raised himself up and listened. Then he arose to his knees. Finally he jumped to his feet, clapped his hands, and cried, "That is what I want! That is what I want!"

Men and women the world over, figuratively speaking, are crawling on their elbows and knees in search of peace and rest and assurance and hope. When they find Christ, they find that for which they seek. The whole world should have Christ, for he is what the world needs.

Many there are who ask: "What is the meaning of life? What is its end? Its reward? Is it worth living? What is life but a constant struggle, full of disappointments, uncertainty, confusion, fear, and a foreboding sense of impending judgment?" Life is reduced to that for many of us. Like the poor Hindu, we lie in despair on the riverbanks of the world. Having crept in, we still have the aching pain.

The world does not satisfy. Here is one who has dipped in material things, only to find the economic system so insecure that there is constant fear of losing that which has been gained. Here is a serviceman literally having crawled upon elbows and knees through blood and fire to make possible a free world. He returns to find not the beautiful, free world for which he fought, but one of strife and bickering, of suffering and anxiety, of disillusionment and uncertainty, with the threatening clouds of war still hanging along the horizon. The awful heartache is still there. There are those who have dipped into pleasure, revelry, loose living, and some in the more refreshing waters of education, social service, and the various philosophies and isms in search of a bit of surcease from the turmoils of life, only to find the pain of uncertainty and insecurity still there. But there is a source of satisfaction. It is in the Christ, who satisfies every human need.

*First:* He satisfies by bringing a joyful note into a sour world. It is interesting to note in the gospels how frequently the words *cheer*, *joy*, and *fear not* appear. Maybe that is why the multitudes followed Christ. He had what they wanted.

A man leaned out of the window of a train in a southern city and called to an old Negro: "Uncle, is there anybody in this town enjoying religion?" And the old Negro replied: "Them's that's got it is." What a profound truth. The satisfying Christ does that.

The Master said in John 15:11: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Later he said, "And your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you."

Joy in a troubled world is neither appreciated nor understood by those who do not know Christ. Peter wrote to those who were in "heaviness" through trials and temptations, and encouraged them to patience and hope. Referring to Christ, he says: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

Is that what the world offers today? Is that the message coming out of our labor strife? Is that the assurance coming from the halls of Congress? Do we receive this confidence from the speeches of our statesmen and our military leaders?

In the last analysis perhaps all our difficulties and disturbances may be traced to sin. The burden of sin grows unbearable. We must find relief. In Jesus we find it, and nowhere else.

*Second:* He satisfies by bringing a hopeful note in an uncertain world. Here is One who says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." How the

world today is burdened with anxiety, fear, distrust, and worry! On every hand there is confusion, maladjustment, misunderstanding, uncertainty and insecurity. The economic, social and political systems of the world bring no abiding sense of security. The world is filled with troubled hearts, not only because of what is seen, but also of that which is unseen—fear of what the tomorrows may bring.

Into this picture comes One who has said, "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." During the influenza epidemic of 1918, many public places, including churches, were closed. One alert pastor made use of the opportunity to install lights on the stained windows of his church, and in those sad days many hungry hearts were refreshed as they looked. They saw Christ as the good Shepherd with the lamb in his arms. They saw the Savior seeking the lost sheep. They saw Christ in Gethsemane; on the cross; and in the triumph of his resurrection; and as the multitudes paused a moment and passed on they were filled with a new sense of confidence and high resolve, for they had seen images of the satisfying Christ.

On the tomb of Dr. John Condor in London is this inscription: "I have sinned, I have repented, I have trusted, I have loved, I rest, I shall rise, and by the grace of God, I shall reign." These are the steps: repentance, trust, acceptance of his grace. Then comes the assuring faith and hope of a never-ending life of victory and joy. It is the satisfying Christ that makes this possible.

*Third:* He satisfies by bringing a saving note into a lost and bewildered world. As the personal representative of God the Father, he reveals his limitless love for mankind. The apostle says in 1 John 4:10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation [complete satisfaction]

for our sins." The cross of Christ is the symbol of that sacrificial love. He who would find the heart of God finds it in the cross of Christ. This is the language all men can understand.

While upon the cross, Jesus laid down for all time the basis of a just and durable peace—peace among individuals and among nations. It comes from his statement, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Forgiveness is the basis of a new world order. There is no power on earth that can cope with a forgiving spirit. This has always been a precious doctrine to the Church of the Brethren. No better method of settling individual differences has yet been found than that given in Matthew 18. It has saved many a serious situation in Brethren circles. To say, "I am sorry. Please forgive me," is not easy, but it can obliterate the barriers to understanding and goodwill. It is difficult, but its power is unsurpassed. It can win and hold a friend. It can save a family from disruption. It can save a church from the blasting influence of internal strife. It can save a world from collapse. Christ's doctrine of seventy times seven startled the world of his day, and even now, nineteen hundred years later, the world has not felt the full power of its influence to reconstruct, rebuild and recreate. This expression of Jesus is the best news that you and I will ever hear. In this, Christ reaches up into the very heart of God and brings his infinite love down within our reach and offers it freely to the world.

Yes, he is the satisfying Christ! He frees from despair and gives hope. He recognizes weakness and supplies strength. He releases from uncertainty and restores confidence. He saves from sin and offers the promise of eternal life. This he does for you and me, individually.



He can also be the satisfying Christ in every human relationship. In him all misunderstandings and hatreds blend into friendship and goodwill. In him all selfishness and bigotry and intolerance melt into the spirit of brotherhood. In him all strife and bickering and rivalry disappear in the emerging comradeship of humanity. In him all social, economic, industrial and political tensions, national and world-wide, are resolved in the redemptive power of the kingdom of God.

May we boldly and fearlessly proclaim the theme, Christ, the Hope of the World, for its complete interpretation is found in the satisfying Christ. In these lines of verse, Mrs. Lucy Larcom has expressed her satisfaction in Christ.

*Life dawns on us, wakes us, by glimpses;  
In Heaven there is opened a door!  
That flash lit up vistas eternal;  
The dead are the living once more!  
To illumine the scroll of creation,  
One swift, sudden vision sufficed;  
Every riddle of life worth the reading  
Has found its Interpreter — Christ.*

# *Christ Crucified*

PAUL S. HERSCH

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## *First Corinthians 1:21-25*

WHEN one begins to suspect that the Bible has no relevance to present-day problems he should reread Paul's letters to the church at Corinth. I have sometimes wondered how a strong church could ever be established in a beach town—especially where the population is continually shifting, where there is a lack of community endeavor, and where the spirit of the day is one of freedom from restraint. Now as one begins to uncover the city of Corinth as it appeared in Paul's day, he finds it was a crossroads of shipping. Its harbor was continually crowded. Sailors and dock hands were a part of the city's scenery. Corinth was a melting pot of the nations. Moffatt notes that there were Greeks, Latins, Syrians, Asiatics, Egyptians and Jews. Corinth had a reputation in that ancient world. Corinthians loved to indulge themselves, often viewing the bloody contests of the gladiators in the arena. Temple worship that would sicken us was the order of the day.

*Paul in Corinth*

ENTERING this city, which represented the limits of pagan depravity, Paul was able to establish a church. Out of that Greco-Latin-Jewish hodgepodge of culture, religion and ethics, he was able to build a brotherhood of men and women in Christ. It was in Corinth that Paul wrote his first correspondence. This included his letters to the Thessalonian and Galatian churches. Since the church was founded in this kind of surroundings, it is quite logical to suspect that certain difficulties would arise. They did. Some of the new members found it hard to break away from the gay life of that city. Our present First Corinthians was his second attempt to straighten them out. In the beginning of this letter he reiterates the cornerstone of the Christian faith, which is "Christ crucified." This is central. It is this with which we want to deal now. As Goodspeed translates, we read these words from Paul:

"For since in God's providence the world with all its wisdom did not come to know God, God chose, through the folly of the gospel message, to save those who had faith in him. For Jews insist upon miracles, and Greeks demand philosophy, but we proclaim Christ who was crucified—an idea that is revolting to Jews and absurd to the heathen, but to those whom God has called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is God's power and God's wisdom. For God's folly is beyond the wisdom of men, and God's weakness is beyond their strength."\*

Thus we dare not stray from this central point of emphasis in the Christian faith. Christ crucified is the One whom we worship as Lord.

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\*1 Cor. 1:21-25, J. W. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Bible, An American Translation*. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press

*The Folly of the Cross*

PAUL says that God has saved men through the folly of the gospel. Is a crucified Christ foolishness? If Christ had never come, and we were presented with such a One as he today, how would we react? Rome accused Christ of subversive activities. If the charges against him sent him to a death in the electric chair, what would we think of him? Might we not write him off our list as a fool? Both Jews and Greeks despaired of Christ's weakness. How could the death of an unknown Jew—one who allowed himself to be taken—offer any help to men who would be strong? Paul said the power of Christ is available through this very act of crucifixion. He preached Christ crucified, an idea revolting to the Jews and absurd to the heathen. Why is the idea revolting and absurd? Perhaps because it seems to lack any punch. Yet Paul says this same Christ is God's power. God's weakness, for that matter, is greater than man's strength. Paul indulges in a play on words. What he is driving at is that the only real strength is paradoxically found in the way of the crucified Christ—a way that looks like weakness to the nonbeliever.

The way of the crucified Christ is the way of persuasion. Christ draws men unto himself; he does not force them to come. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This is the way men are conquered. The crucified Christ and his way of persuasion are the only way men can be won. We talk about liberating the people of Europe. Were they ever really conquered by Hitler—those who did not want to be? The New York Times once noted that Quisling regarded Bishop Berggrav of Norway as his greatest enemy. Yet the bishop had not engaged in any sort of political activity. He had only insisted upon the right of the church to proclaim the gospel. At one time

when Quisling was holding a conference with the bishop, the small-time dictator became so angry that he blurted out, "You triple traitor. You deserve to be beheaded!" The bishop replied quietly, "Well, here I am." Is that kind of nonresistance God's weakness? The good bishop was truly a servant of the crucified Christ.

*"Like People, Like Priest"*

IN 1939 the editorial group of *Fortune* magazine wrote an editorial with a strong appeal to the Christian church to speak in a voice that was not merely an echo of the laity. Jeremiah and Amos once accused their fellow prophets of saying just what the people wanted to hear. Like people, like priest.

As a minister of Jesus Christ I have felt condemned for my small part in contributing to the causes of war. I fully realize that I should have worked more diligently in the years of peace to turn men's hearts toward Christ. When war rages, the eternal voice of Christ rings again and again in one's ears. Sometimes I can not sleep at night because of what it says to me. As I see the crucified Christ, this is what he says to me: "There is my way of salvation. It is through the method of persuasion, drawing men unto me. It is the way that I ask those who believe in me to follow. Nobody can be saved through war. Everybody loses. People thought when I allowed myself to be crucified that the method of coercion had triumphed. Rome had killed me. But look at the Roman Empire today. Then observe that the cross still rises above the wreckage of time. My weakness is greater than man's strength. Yea, my weakness is but the illusion of man. The way of quiet persuasion is the only strength that lasts."

During the first world war the clergy of the country were almost unanimous in their support of war. Pulpits

became recruiting stations. It was truly "like people, like priest." It was not quite the same this last time. Yet there was the constant temptation to bless the conflict as God's righteous cause.

Interestingly enough, those who were farthest removed from the actual conflict were often the most militaristic. We talked about the fine-looking uniforms and tried to inform ourselves about rank and military operations. We talked about battles and victories. It was all quite impersonal. Some time ago I read a ghastly report of an American correspondent in Burma. One hesitates to read it, yet it is necessary to know that war is not the fine physical training, the uniforms, the decorations or even the triumph of a righteous cause.

"The human wreckage from last night's terrible action has come in and is still coming in and the place is a shambles of screaming and groaning men, of stumps of limbs and buckets of flesh, of horrible things with half-faces and half-bodies, of things that you feel it is a pity to keep alive, of men dying on the four constantly filled operating tables, of things under sheets that you would not dare lift up for fear of going mad, of wounded lying half-covered in pools of muddy rainwater because there is no place to put them and no time to make any place, and through it all the doctors and nurses moving and working as though in a daze, as though in a horrible trance, until you walk away from it sick at your stomach and wishing to God you had never gone near it."\*

If as a minister of the crucified Christ I ever bless that method of changing men's minds, I pray that I may be relieved of my right to proclaim the gospel.

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\*Fosdick, *A Great Time to Be Alive*. Harper and Brothers, pages 189-190

*Jews Want Miracles — Greeks Demand Philosophy*

WE are not the only ones who have found it difficult to believe in the way of the crucified Christ. We sometimes accept him without quite knowing what changes will be wrought in us. Paul said, "I preach a crucified Christ, but the Jews want miracles and the Greeks demand philosophy."

The Jews demanded miracles partly because they were finding it difficult to face the hard facts of the world. The sin in the world of that day was horrible. The persecution of Rome was unbearable. They did not know how to meet it. But they thought that the Messiah would change things overnight. Gordon Poteat remarks that the early conception of religion was almost entirely one of winning the favor of the gods, so that one could have good fortune instead of bad. One attempted to coerce his god into his way of thinking. The demand for miracles results from this type of feeling. The Jews wanted miracles because they desired a demonstration of God's material power on their behalf. But when Paul proclaimed a crucified criminal as God's Messiah, it was no wonder the idea seemed scandalous in their eyes.

The Greeks, on the other hand, wanted a rational explanation of everything. And who in the world could explain logically the meaning of a crucified Jew having power to help a Greek! They wanted it worked out in mathematical form. They wanted the explanation to be as simple as two plus two equals four. If Christ had jumped from the pinnacle of the temple, no Jew could have denied that he was great. But Christ said, "Thou shalt not put a test to the Lord thy God." If he had come down from the cross as he was taunted to do, no man would have doubted his divinity. But Christ chose another way. He does not force us to believe in him either

by a mathematical formula, which can not be disproved, or a miracle which can not be denied. He persuades us to believe if we will. The decision is for us to make. We can accept him or reject him. It is for us to decide.

AND so I preach Christ crucified: foolishness to many, a weak way to more, but, unto those who believe, both "the power of God" and "the wisdom of God."

In a family circle one finds the best human example of the way of the crucified Christ. Through the very suffering of a mother, new life comes into the world. In a family the strong support the weak. Love is the binding force and persuasion is the chain that holds the family together. Consider these words from Kagawa:

*Leave to the Greeks their theories of Divinity,  
Abandon to their musty libraries those scholars  
Who fail to love humanity and prefer ivory pagodas:  
Those who have no love of humanity  
Have no way of knowing the love of God;  
The knowledge of the love of God comes only  
By way of the bloody Cross; he who fears to bear it  
Cannot know the love of Christ.\**

The symbol is the cross. By this sign conquer. But let us not forget the way of the One who hung on that cross.

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\*Kagawa, *Meditation on the Cross*, Willet, Clark and Co., page 7



# *Jesus' Good-neighbor Policy*

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*Luke 10:25-37*

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT was not the first to talk about a good-neighbor policy. Jesus talked also about being a good neighbor, and he was one in the real sense. In the tenth chapter of the Gospel According to Luke we have recorded a conversation that took place between Jesus and a certain lawyer. The lawyer was tempting Jesus when he said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus, perceiving the intent of his question, answered, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" Thereupon the lawyer answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." But the lawyer inquired further, attempting to justify himself, "And who is my neighbor?"

It was following this question that Jesus told the famous parable of the good Samaritan. Perhaps this parable could just as correctly be called the parable of the good neighbor because it was told in answer to the lawyer's question, "And who is my neighbor?"

## I

SOMEONE has well said that in the persons of the thief, the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan, one can see three possible attitudes that can be taken towards one's neighbor.

(1) The thief is representative of the person who says to his neighbor, "What's yours is mine if I can get it."

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was known to be a dangerous road upon which to travel. It was twenty miles of rough road that wound down through the mountainous country from Jerusalem, which was two thousand feet above sea level, to Jericho, which was one thousand feet below sea level. Thus a traveler was easy prey to the thieves who hid in this wild country. The scene that Jesus pictured to the lawyer, therefore, was a very familiar one. All men in that vicinity were familiar with the stories of lazy, ruthless men who went through life saying to their neighbors, "What's yours is mine if I can get it."

(2) According to Jesus' story a certain man going along this road fell into the hands of thieves who robbed him of his raiment, wounded him and then went away leaving him half dead.

By chance, or coincidence, a priest happened to pass that way and he saw the man along the side of the road, dying. The priest, chosen of God to be an intercessor for the people, would naturally be expected to befriend all robbed and wounded people, to love mercy and to do justly. But unfortunately, many priests were so busy with the ritual of the temple and the sacrificing of animals that they just could not be bothered with the more menial tasks of binding the wounds of the beaten and caring for the dying. So, "he passed by on the other side."

In like manner a Levite happened to pass that way. He

was a doorkeeper in the house of God, a guardian of the temple, a descendant of the house of Levi. But he too merely looked upon the man and then "passed by on the other side."

That either of these men could have given aid to the one who had fallen among the thieves is obvious. They surely had oil to pour into his wounds and they could have ministered to him spiritually, but they passed by on the other side. Here are two men who learned to get all they could from their neighbors. They had much to give away, but they kept it for themselves. They represent the second attitude that one can take towards his neighbor, the attitude that says, "What's mine is my own if I can keep it."

(3) However, a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to the place where the man was lying along the road, naked, wounded and dying. Immediately a great compassion welled up within his breast, and without asking a question he went to him, poured oil and wine into his wounds, set him on his own beast and took him to an inn. The next day, after paying the innkeeper for taking care of the victim, he guaranteed that when he returned he would pay for anything else that might be spent in caring for the wounded man.

In this despised Samaritan we see a third attitude that one can take towards his neighbor. It is this: "What is mine is yours if you will share it."

## II

Now we must remember that Jesus' purpose in telling the parable was to answer the lawyer's question, "And who is my neighbor?"

To ask this question was really condemnation of the lawyer, because he was distinguishing between people

and setting up boundaries. True neighborliness is not interested in boundaries or maps or creeds or color. Buttrick well says that true neighborliness "seeks not for limits, but for opportunities."

Jesus asked, therefore, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?" The lawyer was quick to answer correctly: "He that showed mercy on him."

You and I can also tell which one had the most neighborly attitude. We know people who say, "What's yours is mine if I can get it." Unfortunately, we also know people who are selfish and self-centered, who say, "What's mine is my own if I can keep it." But fortunately we know people who have the unselfish attitude of the Samaritan, and who say, "What's mine is yours if you will share it with me."

But there is still more to the story. Jesus said to the lawyer after his answer: "Go, and do thou likewise." Here the responsibility is placed upon the lawyer's shoulders. D. L. Moody once said: "I can hire a man to do some work, but I can never hire a man to do my work." And so, knowing which attitude is the best means that we must do something about it, because knowledge always brings added responsibility.

### III

In this incident several important differences between Jesus' good-neighbor policy and the lawyer's good-neighbor policy are apparent.

First, according to Jesus' policy, it does not matter who the neighbor is. Notice that the Samaritan did not ask the wounded man who he was, or who his parents were or what he believed. This made no difference to him. To the lawyer it did. The Samaritan saw only that he

was beaten, wounded and in need. He was moved to give what he had. The priest and the Levite also saw this, but they were moved to pass by on the other side.

Jesus' choice of the Samaritan for the good neighbor was excellent, because over a period of years the Samaritans and the Jews had become bitter enemies—interestingly enough over religious questions. Having many things in common religiously, they differed on questions of worship. It is evident that Jesus was trying to get the lawyer to understand that even the Samaritans could be right, and that they too were neighbors. He seemed intentionally to use illustrations that played up the Samaritans. In one case Jesus healed ten lepers. Only one returned to thank him, "and he was a Samaritan." Jesus also gave some of the deepest teachings about prayer to a Samaritan woman as he conversed with her at Jacob's well. With Jesus' good-neighbor policy it makes no difference who the neighbor is.

Jesus' good-neighbor policy also implies something else, and that is that one must love even the unlovable.

Some people, because of self-centeredness, make it difficult for us to love them. This was true in the case of the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews treated the Samaritans like dogs, and the Samaritans in turn despised the Jews. But as far as Jesus was concerned, real love can overcome all difficulties. So he said: "Go, and do thou likewise."

George Miller, an elder in the Church of the Brethren, had a neighbor who was difficult to love. Brother Miller was a farmer preacher who lived close to Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, in the eighteenth century. He was a man of deep and settled convictions. Once one of his oxen was stolen. He knew where his ox was, because he had a neighbor who was difficult to love. However, he did not

lay claim to his property because he took literally the words of his Master not to ask for the return of stolen goods and not to go to court. His neighbors, however, had no such scruples, and had the thief arrested. While the thief was in prison, Brother Miller, fearing that he might be cold and hungry, walked twenty miles from Elizabethtown to Lancaster to take him warm bedding and food and to discover if he lacked anything. He also wanted to be there to intercede for his neighbor, because the British law was that a thief should be whipped at the post.

That is loving the unlovable. I recall also that some of the Master's last words were: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The third difference between Jesus' good-neighbor policy and the lawyer's is far-reaching because it implies the difference between legalism and real religion. Judaism was bogged down by legalism, narrow-mindedness and red tape. When the lawyer asked Jesus what the first and greatest commandment was, Jesus gave legalism a death blow by going above it and saying that the greatest commandment is to love God. And it is true that in the presence of great need, as in the case of the man on the Jericho road, real religion goes deeper than legalism, and, based on love, it becomes pure and simple.

Perhaps the priest and the Levite had legal reasons for passing up the wounded man. The Jews had given so many twists to the law that there were loopholes for almost any situation. It is possible that if they had touched this beaten neighbor they would have been defiled. And so this story, told to a Jewish lawyer—a legalist—was to the point.

We have heard much during this last war about the honors four chaplains received from the American gov-

ernment. They were a Jew, a Roman Catholic and two Protestants. They had worked together on the deck of a sinking ship in the mid-Atlantic, encouraging the men, getting them onto the life rafts and distributing life preservers. When the supply of life preservers ran out they took off their own, and giving them away went down with the ship. When last seen they were standing together on the deck, their arms around one another in prayer.

Now one does not even imagine that in those last moments these four men were arguing about creeds and beliefs. Rather, they were in prayer to the common heavenly Father! And so I submit to you that in the face of the supreme sacrifice, in the face of need, and in moments of crises, as on the Jericho road, sincerity causes red tape to vanish and religion becomes simple and profound!

We are living in a time when the world sorely needs the good news of a neighbor policy that is real. Not a policy bound up in red tape, for the good of one's self rather than for the good of others; but a policy that says, "What's mine is yours, because I love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, strength and mind, and as a result I love you because God loves you!" Micah lived during a period of Israel's history when there was trouble and legalism, but out of this background he cried: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" This is religion, freed from the shackles of legalism, and now simple and real.

Christianity is being tried today. The world is looking to Christianity to find direction through these days of hatred. Years ago, we were known to the world as a

peculiar people. Peculiar because we believed that we should accept Jesus' words literally, as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount and in Matthew Eighteen. And as we read again the story of the good Samaritan, examining it in light of world conditions, the challenge comes anew to be peculiar, if accepting him and his words as our pattern for life makes us peculiar. And we do this because down through the centuries rings this command from the lips of Jesus, "Go, and do thou likewise."



# *One Having Authority*

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*Matthew 7:29*

THIS is an age when traditional voices of authority are being questioned. It is a time of transition, and the spirit of revolt is in the air. There are those around us who think it is smart to defy those in authority, whether parental, scholastic, governmental or religious. Many are like the Virginian in Owen Wister's book, who, after listening to a sermon on predestination, declared that if he knew what he was predestined to do, he would do something else just to show that he could. It seems to be the nature of some people to want to do the opposite of what they are told to do. Yet in spite of this inclination, we are also made to be obedient to a voice greater than ours. We need a Master. To whom shall we go?

CONSIDER, first, the fact that human reason is to some the voice of authority. There are those who say that what seems right for a man is right. Thus man exalts himself as a god. The highest voice of authority is the voice of man. In this group you will find even co-operative people who are willing to pool the knowledge of men and

thus recognize a collective word of authority. Others may be individualists. They agree that by reasoning, analysis and experience we arrive at the good, the true and the beautiful.

In Jesus' day the Greeks were great philosophers and they accumulated great wisdom. But did they go far enough? You will recall that the cross was to them foolishness. The revelation of God through Christ on the cross was beyond them. John wrote his gospel partly to make Christianity more reasonable to the Greek mind.

Isaiah cautioned his people: "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." Not alone through the subjective reasoning processes of life's experiences can we arrive at what is true. We do not know enough to be absolute judges. Often what seems right for one does not seem right for another. When two people are in a quarrel, in a disagreement, is there not need for an objective reality, a more absolute authority, to help settle the issue?

SECONDLY, consider the place of the authority of the state. Here is another voice that has been speaking through the ages. Pilate was the voice of the state in Jesus' day. In their meeting we have a classic illustration of the clash between relative state power and absolute divine power. Pilate told Jesus, "I have power to release thee, and I have power to crucify thee." But Jesus gave the stunning answer, "You have no power against me, except it were given you from above." Now the interesting point to note is that Pilate recognized this greater power in Jesus. "I find no crime in him. . . . Behold the man!" There was moral and spiritual power that made Pilate anxious to wash his hands of all guilt toward Jesus. Then the Jews cleverly reminded Pilate of his position

with the state, crying, "If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend." Above everything else Pilate wanted to be in good standing with the state, even though it was corrupt. So the voice of organized religion, as represented by the Jews, and the voice of statism, prevailed.

It is interesting to recall Paul's admonition to "let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." If he was speaking of the Roman emperor, as many think he was, obviously he later did not obey his own command. Had Paul been in subjection to Roman rule would he ever have been imprisoned and in the end martyred? At the last he does not boast of his Roman citizenship, which for a season protected him but in the final test failed him completely.

The apostles were right. "We ought to obey God rather than man." When such powers as are ordained of God obey God, then Christians can obey them. But heads of governments are fallible too. The laws of our country recognize this fact. Conscientious objectors do not have to bear arms because of our religious right to obey God, as we understand him, rather than man.

In the third place, consider the authority of the church. This voice has been echoing through the centuries from the famous Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 even to our day. Some say that whatever the church says is true. Soon after Christianity got a good start in the Roman world, a church government was set up patterned after Rome. Beside the emperor was the vicar of Christ, who still rules from the Vatican. Papal decrees have been looked upon as infallible by the great company of Christians of the Roman church.

In the history of our own denomination we have some-

times looked upon the church as being infallible. One of my former teachers tells the story of a conscientious brother who became very ill and called for the elders. As they gathered around his sickbed he told them to get the book underneath his pillow and to read from it. They did. To their chagrin they found that the book was not the Bible, but the minutes of Annual Conference. Sometimes it seems as if we have put Annual Conference minutes on a par with the Bible. We have made pretty much of the authoritative voice of the church. But the church has not always been right.

Part of the church in Paul's day demanded circumcision and part discarded it as an obsolete practice. The church met, and with the leadership of the Holy Spirit, progress was made toward a solution to this vexing problem. We need the authoritative voice of the church. We need to obey it in so far as we can. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our midst. But absolute authority has not always been in the councils of the church.

CONSIDER, furthermore, the Bible as an absolute voice of authority. This is our fourth consideration. Since the time of Martin Luther certain branches have made much of the inerrant, infallible Word of God, the Bible. They take the Bible wholesale and say that we must do whatever it says. To take all the parts of the Bible as equally inspired and of equal importance to Christian living is unrealistic and unchristian. Take the words of Jesus himself. If we cannot believe him, whom can we believe and be Christians? Six times in the fifth chapter of Matthew the record says that Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said, . . . but I say unto you." Six illustrations of what was considered proper conduct for the past are given, but in him there is new light and a new life. In

John 5: 39-40, Jesus places the proud Pharisees beside the new revelation. He says, "Ye search the scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me, and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." What a light this brings to our problem! The Scriptures are authoritative only as they bear witness of Jesus; Jesus' words and his life are authoritative. After Jesus had selected the twelve and had given them an ordination sermon, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, "for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Jesus placed marriage on ground higher than that on which he found it. Divorce was easier under the old law than under the new. We could keep slaves easier under the old dispensation than under the new. We can go to war easier on Old Testament scriptures than on New Testament scriptures.

LET us see, then, if we cannot find the absolute in Christ. As was said of him, "he spoke as One having authority and not as the scribes." Jesus is infinitely greater than his reporters or the records of his life. The revelation of Christ is not fixed, but is unfolding and ever new to those with open minds and receptive hearts.

Now such a faith in Christ does not belittle or discard the Bible as it is but illuminates it and makes it live. Jesus himself said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The Bible is fuller and richer to me today than ever before. Jesus gives it a note of timeliness as well as the mark of eternity. Jesus made it a life-centered book, "that ye may have life eternal."

The death and resurrection of Jesus seal his word of authority. There is a French story that says a young

philosopher came to Prince Talleyrand and told him that he had formulated a new religion. He asked Talleyrand's opinion of it. The prince read the manuscript. When the young man returned, he was complimented by Talleyrand, a keen judge of such matters. "But," said he, "I would like to ask you one question: Do you believe in your new religion enough to be crucified for it?" The young philosopher was not sure. "Then," said the prince, "you might as well burn your manuscript." Jesus died and was resurrected as One having authority. Greater love hath no man than this. The power of his life and death establishes as true all that he said and did.

"EVERYONE that is of the truth heareth my voice," said Jesus. Now the final word of authority comes in experience with Christ. Jesus told his disciples that he could not tell them all the truth while with them. The book was not a sealed book when Jesus left the earth. Rather, he said, "The Spirit of truth shall guide you into all truth," and "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to remembrance all that I said unto you."

After Pentecost the disciples had a plus sign on their countenances. They had a ring of authority hitherto not known. The world took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus, after they had experienced the Spirit of truth in their lives. It is one thing to have external, theoretical authority and quite something else to have the assurance by personal experience. Give it the pragmatic test; it works. There is such a thing as an infallible Christian experience; here is the fact of Christ, objective reality, and here the experimental, the life that rings bells. You have the historical and the experimental coming together in the dynamic lives of the disciples. The

subjective and the objective had come together; the fact and the faith made these men men of power. And the highest degree of certainty in life exists when the historical, objective reality comes together with the contemporary, experimental life. And down through the ages of Christianity the collective experience of Christians corroborates the individual experience of the first few. After all, the proof of Christianity is in men's lives when the historical and the experimental are one. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Christianity is more experience than explanation. All truth must go through the testing fire of one's experience before it catches fire in others. "By thinking we can make God a probability, but by experience we can make him a certainty."

There is some authority in the mind of man, much in the government of a nation, much in the voice of the church and in the words of Scripture, but absolute authority is in Christ. This authority is corroborated by personally practicing his precepts and cultivating his spirit in daily living. Then we know him "as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

# *Go — Be Reconciled*

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## *Matthew 5: 23-24 and Matthew 18*

MATTHEW 18 has figured largely in Brethren teaching, and has guided in countless experiences of reconciliation; but even so, many Brethren have neglected its teachings, or have stumbled in their attempts at reconciliation. The greatest drag on the church today is the broken fellowship between members who need to go and be reconciled. Dig into the facts concerning churches that have closed and churches that are sickly; almost without exception you will find the real root of decay is ill will, jealousy, rivalry, selfishness and misunderstanding between members—open sores that could be healed by the spirit and method of reconciliation.

Yes, reconciliation is both a spirit and a method. The spirit without the method avails little; and the method without the spirit is worse, often leading to more misunderstanding and greater rupture. They must go together as soul and body. But how does reconciliation work? What is it? Let us begin by looking anew at Matthew 18. Two great principles stand out in this chapter: the first in verses one to fourteen, the second in the last fifteen verses; and in between is the way they work together.



THE first principle of reconciliation noted here is deep and loving concern for persons.

Look at your child! What is he worth? He is worth so much that Jesus said a man had better die or never have been born than to cause him to sin. That is what every person is worth. He is worth so much that everything else in the world should be surrendered if need be to save his soul, his personality, his character, his real self from being spoiled by sin. "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! . . . Woe to the man by whom the temptation comes! . . . See that you do not despise one of these little ones. . . . It is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

That is why reconciliation is so important: because ill will and misunderstanding and sin destroy persons. That is why you should go to your brother when he sins. He is God's child and your brother! Therefore you go to him with deep and loving concern in your heart. Just here is where the process breaks down many times. Oh, the tragedy of a vindictive, condemnatory spirit in one who goes to another about his sin! Let us see how the Master did it.

The Pharisees found a woman sinning. Their method was condemnation, heartless punishment. Listen to our Lord. "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again." That is the purpose of reconciliation: to win people from the ways of sin, not to punish them; to save persons, not to destroy them.

Peter had sinned grievously, denying his Lord in his hardest hour. Do you think there was anger, self-righteousness, and condemnation in Jesus' face when he looked at Peter? Oh, no! He had only love and compassion and concern for Peter and sorrow for his surrender to sin, knowing that sin would destroy him. Would anger and

condemnation have melted Peter's heart to penitence? Only love and compassionate concern could do that.

Remember that Jesus spoke Matthew 18 to his disciples and undoubtedly assumed certain qualities in one who would speak to another about his sin. His disciples would understand, on the basis of all that he had been and taught, that they should go humbly, tactfully, fairly, recognizing that they might have misunderstood, and that above all they should go with deep love in their hearts for the person who had sinned.

PETER could not quite stretch his heart to the Lord's measure, and asked him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven." The second principle of reconciliation, then, is unlimited forgiveness.

There can be no reconciliation without forgiveness. The most amazing fact of our salvation through Christ is that God forgives us. But without this there could be no reconciliation. The aim of reconciliation between brothers is salvation—restoration of love and brotherly relations. It is not important to determine the extent of guilt each one bears. When that factor becomes large, there is no reconciliation—only further estrangement and loss. When Jesus discovered recognition of guilt and desire for forgiveness, that was enough for him. While the prodigal was yet a great way off—at the first indication of repentance—his father's forgiveness was immediate and full. There was no raking through the ashes of his prodigal experience to impress him with the grossness of his sin. Jesus was not fixing blame when he hung on the cross; he was praying, "Father, forgive them." This must be the spirit of one who goes to his brother about his sin.

Forgiveness must be there to greet the first indication of sorrow for sin. Only so can reconciliation come.

This spirit of forgiveness must be a constant possession of the Christian. Suppose someone comes to you unexpectedly with confession or with a plea for understanding and warm fellowship. Oh, what tragedy when a young Christian goes to an older one in such a way and finds nothing but an attitude of condemnation and self-justification! "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:15).

LOVING concern for persons and unlimited forgiveness—what a message of reconciliation Matthew 18 brings to us! But something more is needed. Something we Brethren ought not to overlook, for we find it in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matt. 5: 23-24 one reads: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." The Master is commanding us here to be sensitive to our own breaks in the wall of brotherliness. He says we cannot truly worship while we are causing anyone ill will. This other principle of reconciliation, therefore, is awareness of our own part in broken relations—humility and sensitiveness to our own sin.

We have been alert to our brother's sins. We have little difficulty seeing where he has broken the fellowship. But we are slow to turn the light of Christ on our own lives and attitudes. We are adept at showing another his fault or, more likely, showing it to someone else; but we are slow to see our own sins and confess them to our brother, asking forgiveness and reconciliation. But there it is;

Christ demands it. "If your brother has something against you, go; be reconciled."

Notice the absence of any qualifications in this commandment of our Lord. He does not say, "If you have sinned against your brother." He says, "If your brother has something against you." He says nothing here about whether or not you are guilty. Perhaps you have done nothing wrong that you know of to provoke ill will. That does not excuse you. If ill will exists, the Master bids you to go and be reconciled. Let everyone, beginning with leaders in the church—everyone who discovers any ill will, any coldness toward himself—go in humility and penitence and seek reconciliation. Do that, and we will see a greater demonstration of the power of God in the church than we have yet imagined. The church will move forward as never before. Yes, it is humiliating to ask forgiveness, especially when we are not sure we have done wrong. But that is just what the Savior demands. "Go; first be reconciled to your brother." The more we have sinned, the more speedily and humbly should we approach our brother. But anything which causes another to stumble and lose his grip on God and breaks his fellowship with the church is sin. Therefore, we urgently need this principle of reconciliation: sensitiveness, awareness of any ill will or coldness toward us and a readiness to go quickly and humbly to be reconciled.

Matt. 5: 23-24 and Matt. 18—both are genuine coin of the realm—of basic value in the kingdom of God, for they were coined by our Lord. Indeed, they are the two sides of the same coin—the coin which obtains reconciliation.

In his later years Joseph had a rich fund of this coin of the kingdom. Watch him with his brothers before him—at his mercy. Truly his guilt was small compared with theirs, but he took the initiative in reconciliation. There

is no condemnation or self-justification in his attitude—only humility and faith in God and love for his brethren. He took their treachery and deceit upon himself and bore it; he forgave them fully because he loved them and realized their worth to his father and theirs. Thus they were reconciled, and brotherly love wrought its saving work.

But Christ alone is the perfect embodiment of his own counsel. Entirely blameless, he humbled himself and spent his entire ministry going to his brothers, seeking reconciliation. And finally, with unlimited forgiveness and loving concern for men in his heart, he gathered all the sins and broken fellowship of all men into himself and died on the cross that we might be reconciled to God.

Humility, sensitiveness to our own responsibility, love for persons, and unlimited forgiveness—these qualities must find rootage and grow in our hearts if we would serve in the spirit of the reconciling Christ.

# *The Word of God Is Not Bound*

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## *2 Timothy 2:8-9*

PAUL was in a Roman prison when he wrote the words of our text. He was suffering persecution for much the same reason that Martin Niemoeller and other Christians have been in concentration camps in our modern day. Paul was bound in chains because of his faith in Jesus Christ. He refers a number of times to the Roman prison in which he wrote this letter to Timothy. In one of these references is found our text: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel; wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."

There have been times in the history of the church when men literally tried to bind the Word of God. During the Middle Ages it was actually chained to the pulpits of the churches where but a few priests had access to this light of the centuries. For over fourteen hundred years the common people were forbidden the use of the Bible. It was not until after the invention of printing by Gutenberg in 1453 that the Bible came into the hands of a larger number of people. Even then it was bulky and

expensive. Martin Luther and other reformers made desperate efforts to give the Bible to all the people. But the struggle was hard. William Tyndale was chased out of England and was burned at the stake because he was an ardent believer that the common people should have a firsthand acquaintance with the Scriptures. His dying prayer was: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." But the persecution continued. The Bible was bound by the customs and superstitions of that age. It was not until the reign of Queen Elizabeth that men's eyes were opened to the need of unlocking the chains that kept people in ignorance of the Word of truth.

In 1649 an important thing happened. A small and inexpensive New Testament was printed. It sold in great numbers. Soon millions of people all over Europe had access to the New Testament. As a result the Pietistic movement began in Germany, the Puritan movement in England, the Huguenot movement in France. These three groups were now getting a glimpse of the real religion of the New Testament. Out of the Pietistic movement in Germany, with its emphasis on a knowledge and practice of the New Testament, the Church of the Brethren was born in Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708.

There have been times when the Word of God was bound, limited and distorted, so that people did not know the real truth of the Book. It is possible to do the same thing in our day. But Paul says, "The Word of God is not bound."

FIRST, the Word of God is not bound by time. The truth of this Book is just as applicable for our day as it was for the age in which it was written. Someone said of Jesus, "His boundaries are frontierless and his life is dateless." The same can be said of the Bible, especially those inter-

pretations of it which are in harmony with the spirit and life of Jesus Christ, who is the Living Word.

One of the cabinet members said of Lincoln at the time of Lincoln's death, "Now he belongs to the ages." He meant to say that one cannot put a date on Lincoln's life. His greatness will be recognized for all time. His spirit cannot be confined to the day in which he lived; it flows over the centuries. The same can be said of the Bible. The Word of God is not bound to the seventh century before Christ, or to the first century after him, or to the twentieth century. It has a message that is timeless. It is said that the Outline of History written by H. G. Wells actually had to be revised before it was published because some of the "facts" in that book were already out of date. Not so with the Bible. You cannot put a date on the truth of the Word of God. You cannot say it is good for one generation but not for another. It is not bound by time.

SECOND, the Word of God is not bound by place. Most of the events recorded in the Bible happened in the little country of Palestine, which is about one eighth the size of the state of Pennsylvania. But the Bible has not remained in Palestine; it has gone into all the world. The Word of God is not bound by place. Its truth must become a part of the warp and woof of the political and social structure of all nations if they are to stand.

One cannot visualize any kind of decent, stable society where the principles of the Word of God are not practiced. For instance, if ninety per cent of the people of any community or nation began to steal from one another, you could not have any kind of ordered society. Or if half of the people of a community or nation became drunk with alcohol, there would be chaos. Or if people began killing one another in sufficient numbers, the world would



go up in flames. There can come a new day to the world only when all people master the great underlying principles of the Word of God. Without a mastery of some of these elemental truths we can have nothing but war and disintegration. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." That is true all over the world.

We do not need to be very keen students of American history to know that the freedom we have had as a nation roots deep in Biblical precepts. And we need to remember that if we cut the roots of our ancient faith, our freedom and our democracy will wither. The living of the principles of the Christian religion will make people free all over the world because the Word of God is not bound to any one country. It is not a book for Palestine alone, or for America, but for the world.

THIRD, the Word of God is not bound by the ineffectiveness of the ministry. I am saying now that we as ministers who have been entrusted with the high responsibility of teaching and preaching the message of the Book have often been so handicapped by our ignorance, by our narrow dogmatism, by our lack of devotion, by our selfish whims and fancies as to hinder our usefulness and service. I am sure all ministers are aware that more than once hungry souls come to the church service and look up to us for the Bread of Life, and often we do not know how to feed the spirits of men. We as ministers know only a few of the great truths of the Word of God. We cannot comprehend them all, for the truth is bigger than any man's interpretation of it and God is greater than anything men have yet said about him.

We ministers are very human instruments. While we are certain we do not have the answers to all the ques-

tions, or a knowledge of the whole truth, we are sure that some gleams of light have found their way into our minds and hearts. It is said that Henry Ward Beecher was walking down the streets of Brooklyn and heard music coming through an open window. "That's Beethoven," he said. It was Beethoven, but it was not all of Beethoven. It was just enough for Henry Ward Beecher to recognize it as coming from the pen of the great composer. So people who come to the church service may not hear all of the truth of this Book, for ministers see through a glass darkly, but perhaps people catch enough of the harmonies of the Bible in the church service to know that it has come from the Author and Finisher of our faith. If the Word of God were bound by the limitations of some of us who preach it, it could scarcely be called "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path."

FOURTH, the Word of God is not bound by the weaknesses of church members. I sometimes marvel how the Bible can continue to be the world's best seller when the average church member is such an inadequate demonstration of the type of life which the teachings of this Book can produce. At best all of us have been unfaithful servants. The kind of life which this Book would have Christians live is far above that which most of us have yet attained. The Word of God is not confined to the life patterns of those of us who profess to follow it. It reveals a way of life which "shines more and more unto the perfect day."

FIFTH, the Word of God is not bound by the decisions of churches as they meet in conference and formal assemblies. I say this humbly because I have deep respect for the decisions of our own Annual Conference. But if one

looks at the decisions of the Annual Conference seventy-five or a hundred years ago, one can understand why no one church group can place a binding interpretation on the Word of God for all time. At best we can interpret the truth as we see it for our own day, and even then we are subject to error. There was an Annual Meeting minute in 1827 which stated that no carpets should be allowed on the floors of Brethren homes. In 1859 there was a decision that the walls of the Brethren homes must not be papered with flowered paper. In 1862 there was a minute advising against the wearing of gold watches; in 1866 a minute forbade the use of musical instruments by Brethren people. In 1851 there was a minute against the use of lightning rods; in 1856 one against life insurance and insurance on property. In 1838 a minute stated that the Brethren should take no part in Sunday-school class meetings. High school education was forbidden in that period. The Brethren said, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." A high school was ranked with high things. No, the Word of God is not bound by any assembly in any church that is likely to confuse a part of the truth with the whole truth.

In this respect the early Brethren were wise by not forming a creed. The Word of God is not bound by any creed. The Brethren realized this fact; they felt that they were not wise enough to make a creed, and they had faith that the generations yet unborn would discover new truth. So the Brethren said that the New Testament is our creed and the living Christ is our Head.

SIXTH, the Word of God is not bound by any single interpretation or by any one school of theology. It is not bound by the conservative dogmatists on the one hand or by the radical liberals on the other. The Word of God is not

bound by those who claim to find the Antichrist in one verse, the present pope of Rome in another verse, and the newest dictator in another. History has too often reversed the ironclad decisions of some of these so-called Biblical interpretations.

Several years ago a number of radio evangelists were broadcasting that Mussolini was the Antichrist, or at least the forerunner of this fearful character. Furthermore, these radio preachers asserted that the Roman Empire was being revived and would increase in power under Mussolini until it would control the whole Mediterranean area, North Africa, Palestine, even France and England. This, they said, was clearly written in the Word of God. They were certain that the rise of the Roman Empire in our modern day and Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia were clearly prophesied in the Bible. For them, this was an unmistakable sign of the end of the age. It was so written in the Bible, they said. But Mussolini's dream of world conquest did not materialize. His empire has disintegrated and he himself has passed off the stage of human history in a more ignominious fashion than did his predecessors—Caesar, Napoleon, Alexander.

We do not know all the truth. We know some of it. The Word of God is not bound by any single interpretation of it or by any one school of theology. The truth is bigger than any man's mind and God is greater than any man's picture of him.

What then shall we do with this Book that is not bound? Three things: read it; believe it; live it. We ought to read it with regularity and understanding. We ought to believe it with a mind that is on the alert for new truth. We ought to live it in such a way as to apply in every life situation the highest truth which we have discovered within its pages.

# *I Believe in the Church*

W. GLENN McFADDEN

Pastor, Troy, Ohio

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)*

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it (1 Corinthians 12:27)*

“THE only general body which enjoys confidence is the church. She is trusted as being impartial. People set their inner and outward hopes on Christians.” These words, written after the parade of death had marched across Europe, are a present living testimony of the words of Jesus recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew: “I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.”

What is this institution called the church, which has been defying the powers of death for all these centuries? From whence comes its death-defying power? How do men, mere men, like Peter of old, and other mortal men

of today, have such victory over the forces of evil in our world? Can it be that we have not realized fully what it means for you and me to belong to the church? Surely we have not been enough aware of the power of the church. We have had our minds so filled by radio, newspapers and public demonstration that we see only the powers of this world. Let us look at this group of people whom Paul calls the members of the very body of Christ.

### *The Church Is Divinely Instituted*

It is not man-made. God takes the faith of man, as he took that of Peter, and upon that faith he builds the church. The first requisite for membership in this body is faith. Therefore one does not join the church first; he accepts Christ as Savior, commits all of life to him as the revelation of God's will, and then by virtue of this basic choice he becomes a part of the body of Christ on earth, his church.

Since man must commit his all to Christ, therefore the church has a prior allegiance above all other loyalties. Self, family, state, race, culture, and nation must all take lower places. That is the reason Brethren oppose the use of national flags in their churches. The national flag symbolizes a lesser loyalty. Christianity surmounts nationalism. The cross, not a flag, is the Christian symbol. The cross is universal, the national flag provincial.

### *The Church Is a Divine Fellowship*

THE early church called it the *koinonia*, a spiritual fellowship which meant more than mere friendship—much more. Then there was something precious about “fellowship in Christ,” and there still is. We are “members one of another.” “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.” The early pagan society said of the early Christian fellowship: “Be-

hold, how they love one another." This fellowship in Christ shows itself in times of sorrow, of need, and of crisis, just as much as in times of rejoicing. The fellowship of the church is in a real sense the outreach of "the everlasting arms" of God. It is always a redemptive outreach, going forth to all who are in need, regardless of distance, race, or creed.

This early fellowship, or *koinonia*, was so strong that there just wasn't room for members who would lie to one another, as did Ananias and Sapphira. It was so strong that there was no room for selfish indulgence while others went hungry, as Paul records in 1 Cor. 11, and which we read for self-examination preceding our brotherhood meal today in our observance of the love feast. Truly, they felt themselves to be members one of another, but also members of one body—Christ.

### *The Church Is the Body of Christ*

RICH man or poor man; male or female; white or colored—all are members of the body. There is no such thing as a church apart, alone, not a member of this body of Christ, for such would not be a church. We have been too denominational, thinking of our church as *the* church. It is all right to be loyal to one's church, that is, one's particular denomination, for he who is loyal to no denomination in particular is quite likely to be not too loyal to any church in general. D. Elton Trueblood, in his book, *The Predicament of Modern Man*, points out that a man who desires to join the trunk can find nothing but branches. I think this is a true observation, and we need to change the emphasis, so that all of us in the church will see it straight; then the outsider will have different evidence on which to pass his judgment. When we join the Church of the Brethren, we accept Christ first, become a member of the body (the "trunk"), and

then choose to serve in and through the local Church of the Brethren, which is the branch. We do join the trunk, or we do not join! One first becomes a disciple, a follower of Christ, and he becomes that the moment he makes his decision. But he may need years to come to be what we call a "Brethren." That is subject to training, and the impression of our heritage upon him. But even before he may become a "Brethren" he is a member of the body and a fellow member of all others who belong to the body, the church universal.

The Madras Conference of 1938 said: "The Church Universal is essentially the extension of the life of Christ in the world and embraces all who are in union with Christ." That is the kind of church, which, united to confront the great evils of our world, has prevailed against the powers of death all over the world in our day. Such a church has authority! Martin Luther saw that this Spirit moving through the church was the real authority of the church, and said: "Authority is not to be found in the letter of the Bible, but in the Spirit of God speaking through the pages of the Bible and understood by spiritual man."

Our belief in democracy in the Church of the Brethren is an expression of the belief of Martin Luther. We believe that God might speak through the voice of the church and make his will known to us. Acts 15, the chapter which we always read at our Annual Conference and at most district meetings, records the democracy of the early church: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. . . ." Their votes were guided by the Holy Spirit. He spoke his will through spiritual men.

If the church is the body of Christ, then we as members of that body must go where he would go, must do what he would do, must take his ministry of healing, of teaching, of saving, and of redemption to everyone he would



save. Let us be thankful for all of this work which other members of the body are doing all over the world. Note the sense of service of the Quakers, the spirit of reverence of the Episcopalians, the social outreach of the Methodists, the emphasis on the will of God and sense of destiny of the Presbyterians, the authority of the church as interpreted by the Lutherans, the joyous faith of the Negro members in spite of terribly depressing circumstances. How poor any of the members would be without the contributions of the others! Indeed, how poor we have been!

*Therefore, Let the Church Be the Church*

THE church has become too tainted by the secular mind of our world. National and civic aims have been confused with spiritual purposes. Secondary loyalties have been placed in first position by many church members. The rock of faith is the only foundation on which Christ can build his church. A reed swaying as the wind blows will soon wither and die. The church can be the church only as church members are Christian!

We are glad for the stories of heroic faith which have come out of other countries during the period of war and persecution. We are thrilled by the story of Russians laying bits of the Sermon on the Mount around their houses before they fled from the Germans, so that the Germans might pick them up and read them. We thought of other earlier martyrs as we read of Kaj Munk, pastor in Denmark, who paid with his life for his opposition to pagan philosophy, continuing to preach that first loyalties must be given to God. We were humbled by the courage of young Christians in Holland, who, when every Jew was required to wear a yellow star on his shoulder to identify him, all put on yellow stars too! Kagawa in Japan, constantly standing out against the militaristic policy of his nation, has been an inspiration to all peace-loving people

around the world. Bishop Berggrav protesting against nazi domination of the church in Norway is a symbol of fortitude. Archbishop Damaskinos of Greece, protesting the shooting of eighteen Greek hostages in reprisal for the death of a nazi officer, was asked why the eighteen should be spared. He pointed out that they were heads of families and were needed. The nazi commandant demanded the lives of eighteen men, and did not care who they were. The archbishop volunteered to find him eighteen others, but was met by scorn at such a wild suggestion. "I don't suppose you could name me eighteen other Greeks willing to give their lives instead, could you?" the nazi replied. In answer the Greek bishop immediately took a pencil and wrote down eighteen names—his own name first, the other seventeen being the names of other bishops of Greece! The nazi confined him to prison for the next six months as a dangerous character! That's Christianity, the body of Christ, the church, at work around the world.

But the church is not always so dramatic, the events it has to face not always so desperate. But it is at work nevertheless. The church is symbolized also by:

The farmer who is a good neighbor, who gives good measure, pressed down and running over;

The businessman who makes honesty his only policy, and places service above profits;

The factory owner who pays a fair wage and knows how to get along with his fellow men, treating them as men and not as units of labor to be purchased;

The factory worker, who gives an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, and who helps his fellow man, seeing in his work that which will bring more good to mankind, and not seeking to satisfy his own selfish demands first;

The lawyer who pleads in the court for justice, and tries to temper justice with mercy;

The doctor who gives his life to heal the sicknesses of others and always gives the credit to the One who heals all our diseases;

The missionary who leaves loved ones and home to go out and take the gospel of good news to other loved ones of the family of God;

Yes, these and many others who in the name of Christ do these things are the living church, the body of Christ today.

As all of us make our daily lives witnesses to this spirit of Christ within, and as we go forth to tell the gospel of Christ in word and in deed, here at home and all over the world, we are members of his body. For, as Paul says, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all."\* This is the church in which I believe.

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\*Eph. 4:4-6. From the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, copyrighted 1946 by the International Council of Religious Education, and used by permission

## *"We Have This Treasure"*

DEWITT L. MILLER

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*2 Corinthians 4:7*

IN Second Corinthians Paul wrote in defense of his apostleship. He first of all answered the charges that had been made against him. But Paul was a great preacher and it was not long until he began to write in confident, glowing terms of the greatness of the apostolic office and of the glorious gospel message. Then he changed his mood, as he did so often in this epistle. He said that while the gospel is a glorious thing reflecting the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, it does not follow that he who preaches the gospel shares in the glory of the gospel he preaches. For, he said, in the words of our text, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."

We know, of course, to what he referred. His body was imperfect—he was not a well man. His spirit had been broken by worry and disappointment. He labored always as though death were near at hand to keep him from the work he had to do. While he never got to the place where he was willing to give up, the tone here is one of inadequacy for the task at hand. A glorious treasure, but kept in earthen vessels—vessels not fit to keep it, wholly in-

capable of showing it off to best advantage, not very attractive wrappings such as would make men desire it.

Here is a parallel to life today. For years and years the church and the Christian religion have promised the world the treasure of salvation. Time and time again men have turned to the church only to discover the treasure is kept in earthen vessels, and, seeing the earthen vessels and not the treasure, they have rejected it. Recently I received a pamphlet through the mail. It was a series of radio sermons collected by the editor of the pamphlet to show how ineffective religion is in meeting the practical and pressing problems of life. In the preface the collector made this statement: "I fear, I very much fear, the churches have finally succeeded in committing suicide. All that they can do now will be too little, and centuries too late." We have had a glorious treasure in the possession of the gospel, but the vessels in which it was kept—the church, your life and mine—were far from being glorious. A heavenly message but an earthly messenger—a perfect gem of a treasure in a setting of clay.

What a tragedy that is because if there was ever a time when the world needed the message of religion and the church that time is now. The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation for both men and nations unto all who will accept it, believe it and follow it.

Men are desperately seeking salvation in the political realm. A radio commentator stated recently that efforts to perfect the United Nations organization were not based so much on idealism as on pressing need. The dawn of the Atomic Age has given the responsible leaders of all nations a frightful case of the jitters and they know there is no salvation in the old ways. Neither is there salvation in the jittery fear which possesses them. There can be no salvation until fear gives place to trust, confidence,

goodwill and an adoption by all nations of a live-and-help-live policy. We of the church have the treasure.

Right now there is evidence all about us of the need for economic salvation. Burdened with war debts, and with the economy of the world disrupted as a result of war, we fear another depression and perhaps even the overthrow of our present economic system. We frantically seek a solution to our problem. On top of this, place the bottleneck conditions due to the strife between capital and labor. There is real need for economic salvation. Some people see red when the preacher begins to talk about economics and charge that he had better stick to the gospel. But I say to you today that we are in the mess we are in because there is not enough religion in business either on the side of capital or of labor. What is more, there will be no economic salvation except on the basis of the Christian ideals of justice, mutual trust and mutual sharing of both responsibilities and rewards. I care not whether such a position is socialistic or capitalistic, I know it is good Christianity. We have this treasure in our hands.

THERE is another realm in which salvation is needed—the social realm, particularly as it applies in the area of racial tensions. Perhaps at no time since the Civil War has the problem of race been so acute, and this time the tension is not between members of one race on behalf of another, but between the races themselves. World observers tell us the problem is coming to a head in this way: it will be the white race against all the colored races, if the white race continues its false assumptions of superiority and its practice of subjecting other races to places of virtual servitude. Coming from the Southland, I know that the problem is not as easy of solution as some

would suggest, but as a casual student of the problem I know that something has to be done—and quickly. It is my profound conviction that the only solution is on the basis of religious principles. "God has made of one blood all nations." The Hebrews overcame the ancient Egyptians; the barbarians finally overran Rome. The testimony of history is unimpeachable. The surest way to race suicide is to try to keep other races from the good things of life and at the same time make them furnish these good things for us. "In Christ there is no east or west; in him no south or north." There is no other way. This foundation stone is worth a king's ransom and we have this treasure.

WE are keenly aware today of the need for physical salvation. The press is crying the need of millions of people in Europe and Asia who lack even the bare essentials for living. We face the uncomfortable fact, every time we sit down to a meal, that millions of people will probably starve in the next few months because they lack the proper food, clothing and shelter. We have two choices. We can selfishly partake of our blessings and let the millions die. If we take this way we can be assured that fires of resentment, bitterness and hatred will be kindled in the lives of those who watch their loved ones die, and that some day, if not you and I, then our children and our grandchildren, will pay with their lives for our selfishness. The other way is to give the cup of cold water, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide homes for the homeless and friends for the friendless in the knowledge that only by building bridges of friendship and brotherhood can we span the chasms of suffering and hatred. I do not need to tell you which one represents the Christian way. It is a treasure, and we have it to share.

IN our obsession with social problems of all kinds we have almost forgotten the need for moral salvation. This has always been recognized as being within the province of religion. Religion is the source of moral idealism, moral courage and personal strength sufficient for moral living. It is perhaps another evidence of the earthiness of the vessels in which the treasure of moral salvation is kept that we see about us such evidences of moral reverses. A recent speaker pointed up a matter of which every traveler is keenly aware—the sex looseness of our times. The instability of home life, and the skyrocketing of the divorce rate reveal a moral sickness and threaten the moral foundations of the social order. The dulling of our moral consciousness on the matter of drinking, smoking and other lesser vices of intemperate living like overeating, lack of rest and the maintenance of life at a hectic pace and under a nervous tension far beyond that for which we were created, endangers both the health and the sanity of our nation. We need another Hosea to rise up and say, "Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of Jehovah in the land. There is naught but swearing and breaking faith, and killing and stealing and committing adultery; they break out and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and everyone that dwelleth therein shall languish . . . O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God . . . Take away all iniquity and accept that which is good . . . The Ways of Jehovah are right and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein." Life in obedience to the moral law of God is our only hope of salvation. Christianity has that hope. It is its unique possession. We have the treasure.



MAY I mention just one more need of this hour. We all need personal salvation—a sense of divine forgiveness, a sense of being at peace with God, a sense of adequacy for the task at hand and a restored confidence in the outcome of the cause of justice, righteousness and truth. We have come through years of blood and tears; years when we groped to find our way; years when we were caught in a maelstrom of forces which found us many times in strange company doing things we knew were wrong, and yet seeing no clear way out and hearing no clear voice to guide us; years in which it seemed that all the efforts for righteousness and peace of the last twenty-five years had gone for naught. Here we are—confused, blood on our hands, minds filled with haunting thoughts and memories, no clear sense of direction, confidence shaken, overcome many times with a sense of futility. We are lost—we need a Savior. Where will we find one? In the political realm? In the business or social world or in one of the economic theories? In ourselves? I know what you are saying. “Don’t make us laugh. If you are not jesting, don’t try to mock us. All that is utter darkness.” Ah, but there is a way out. There is a Stone—the builders have rejected it—and it can become the cornerstone of a new world—God’s world. “There is no other name given under heaven among men wherein we must be saved.” He who stood at the crossroads of history and felt the destructive winds of political conflict, class distinction, racial bigotry, moral corruption and spiritual indifference has the answer—and he lived it. He opened his life to the Father’s will, he dedicated himself to the task of executing that will, he followed the way of the cross for the sake of that will, and he discovered that the way of the cross is the way to victory. His way is the way we too must go; for it, and it alone, is

the way of salvation for men and nations. That treasure is ours.

WITH such a treasure, the pearl of great price, in the possession of a divided church—split by sectarian differences, a church that is run by human beings who let their pride, their desire for power and status, and their limited points of view dissipate their energies and prostitute their efforts—it seems as if God made the world's biggest blunder when he placed this treasure in earthen vessels. The fact that he did can mean only one thing, and that is that God had greater confidence in these earthen vessels than we have. We have concentrated our attention upon the weakness of the vessel; God looked at what the vessels might become.

The hour has struck when we should bring the earthen vessels of our lives to the altar of God to dedicate them fully to his uses, that the treasure which is ours might be made available to redeem the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of our day. The time is here when the schisms in the body of Christ must be healed, time when the treasure must not be held in a cracked vase. No longer dare we center our attentions upon peripheral affairs and waste our energies upon temporary matters. Eternal issues are at stake. The time for soothing syrup and rest cures is past. Moral and spiritual surgery is the order of the day, and he who hesitates now is lost. Before the altar of God we need to confess our sins, to admit our moral cowardice, to lay bare our fears and cry out: "‘Have thine own way, Lord . . . Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, after thy will,’ that I might be a vessel meet for the Master’s use."

Jesus said, "I give unto you the keys of the kingdom." What are we waiting for? Let's unlock the doors and

enter in. We have this treasure. It is in earthen vessels, to be sure, but we have it, and we can keep it only by giving it to others. What a task for this church! What a task for every church! What a responsibility for you and me—to be the earthen vessels which contain the treasure of the kingdom!

# *Personal Responsibility*

R. H. MILLER

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*Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4)*

NEEDING the services of one of our local medical men, I phoned for an appointment. "My time is entirely taken today," he said. And then, "Wait a minute: you come down at one-fifteen and I'll try to work you in." I did. When I walked into his office, I greeted him with, "Good afternoon, Doctor; how are you?" "I'm not in a very good humor," he said. I ventured to ask why. He explained. "Two people had engaged my time this forenoon and neither of them showed up." Here was a lack of personal responsibility! In these unkept appointments I saw a disease of our society, one that is widespread.

## *I*

LET us consider some factors and conditions which tend to undermine the sense of personal responsibility.

1. You were inconvenienced by delay or incompetence on the part of someone. At the first sign of impatience

you were stopped short by "Don't you know there's a war on?" This excuse was greatly overworked, letting many pieces of incompetence get by. We should begin to take responsibility for things that do not go right, and stop blaming them upon the war or some other convenient alibi.

2. There are in our world vast trends and movements which seem to sweep us helplessly before them. We go along against our wills. We cannot help ourselves. Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* is addressed to this painful problem. Man would be moral but there are standards, conventions and practices which seem to demand of him that he relax the claims which his own conscience makes upon him.

3. It is common knowledge that slums often produce criminals while good Christian communities generally produce good citizens. This fact may incline a product of the slums to say: "I am not to blame for what I am. If you had grown up where I did you would be no better than I am."

4. A perversion and misuse of one of the basic assumptions of science has also contributed to the decrease of personal responsibility. The assumption is that every event is the result of certain causes, which are in turn the results of other causes, and those of others, and so on indefinitely. Now this assumption has been fruitful of good in the scientific field. But for any man to stand up and say that his conduct is the result of causes which operate beyond his reach, and that, therefore, he is not responsible, is a gross perversion of this principle.

5. The way news is now gathered and disseminated is relevant here. Crime and propaganda are screamed at us continuously. I am not protesting against this. The re-

sult is, I think, on the whole, good. It is a new condition, and we must become adjusted to it. We must be on our guard, however, lest it destroy that fine sensitivity to right and wrong within ourselves which is the very essence of personal responsibility.

6. There is another condition, which, in my judgment, outweighs all of the others. It is the notion that a thing is allowable if one is strong enough to do it and clever and lucky enough to get by with it. Here we confront something that is disturbing and dangerous. At the very sound of these words we inwardly exclaim, "No, I don't believe that." Probably not one who reads this would stand up and avow his belief in this criminal's code. But words disavowing this code must not be taken as final. Here is a better test. Do you now retain gains, financial or otherwise, which you have made by methods that are below the standard of Christ? Do you retain those gains without any regret for the way you got them, unwilling to make amends? If you do, in spite of all you say, you are a believer in the nazi philosophy that a thing is allowable if you are strong enough to do it and lucky enough to get by with it.

## II

LET us consider now the nature and function of responsibility. In the last analysis it is a matter of owning one's own children. Having said or done something, one openly identifies oneself with it. If it is true, one puts oneself under the care and keeping of God Almighty, for God is pledged to make the truth triumph. If one lives that which he knows to be false, he puts himself under the wrath of God, for God's wrath must fall upon that which is false. Personal responsibility is, in the last analysis,

identifying one's welfare and fortune with what one says and does.

1. Personal responsibility sets up a condition which is favorable to self-criticism, the discovery of one's own faults, repentance for them and amendment of one's ways.

The period of man's existence upon the earth might be divided into two parts: that recent and smaller part which we call the historical period, and that remote and much larger part which we call the prehistoric period. The writing of history is, in a sense, the assignment of responsibility. History records who did what and why. It is highly significant that man's progress during the short historical period has been much more rapid than it was during the longer prehistoric period. History establishes responsibility. It makes it possible for mankind to criticize itself. By writing history the human race builds up about itself a multitude of incentives to self-examination, elimination of faults and the increase of that which is good.

This principle applies to the individual as well as to the race. The man who accepts personal responsibility surrounds himself with incentives to examine himself. He also gives himself means of examining himself intelligently, so that he may repent of his mistakes and go further in the direction of those things which are right.

The evader of responsibility blurs and confuses the picture. He is a stranger to the incentives which lead to self-examination and to repentance for that which is not good. The man who evades responsibility puts himself, as it were, into the state of prehistoric man. He does not confront himself with what he has done. He cannot examine his life. He has ceased to grow. As a matter of fact, his state is worse than that of prehistoric man, because he willfully destroys the record upon which per-

sonal responsibility might be built. Prehistoric man was innocent of that fault.

2. On the positive side, personal responsibility works what is essentially a miracle in the lives of men. The following might be the story of a dozen men I know. The father is the owner and manager of a business in which many families earn their living. All unexpectedly the tragedy of death takes him away. The responsibility for the business settles like a landslide upon the shoulders of a fun-loving, irresponsible young man in the middle twenties. Friends wait aghast for a second disaster, which they are sure is not far distant—the collapse of the business. The sequel? The second disaster does not happen! The boy takes over the responsibility for the business. Under his care, and upon the good foundations which his father laid, the business grows in usefulness and in profit.

This story would be true in your home, would it not? A little daughter who must be called repeatedly in the morning is told by her mother that she is to have charge of her younger brothers and sisters, of the house and of her father for a couple of days. The mother herself must be away. In the morning the father gets up and goes to the basement to tend the furnace. While there he hears the footsteps of his daughter in the kitchen above. During all of her mother's absence she is faithful to every detail of the responsibility which rests upon her. When personal responsibility is wisely and rightly placed, a miracle of grace takes place in the hearts of those who carry it.

### III

How can we increase a sense of responsibility, both in ourselves and in others?



1. There is no substitute for beginning early. A child who is taught to take care of his toys may some day become the man who saves a nation. The open country with woodland, hills and running water, which many of us knew as children, gives an opportunity to rove and venture which teaches lessons of personal responsibility and initiative that are learned with difficulty elsewhere. I sometimes wonder if our children in towns and cities are not missing something very essential.

2. There must be room for criticism. Freedom to criticize is one of the essential freedoms. Our democracy should be proud of it and cherish it. It was interesting to contrast fascist Italy and nazi Germany, on the one hand, and Great Britain, on the other, in regard to this matter of criticism. In Italy or Germany one criticized the leader of the state at the peril of his life. But witness the tragic ends of those men who were thus immune to criticism. In England, however, they specialize in protecting and hearing the critics. The party that is out of power, which carries no official responsibility, whose role it is to heckle and criticize the party in power, is significantly called "His Majesty's loyal opposition."

3. We need to remind ourselves that personal responsibility cannot be evaded. Men may seem to get by. They may escape certain physical inconveniences for a while, but for such escape they pay the price of increased inner torment and remorse. Responsibility is unescapable.

The philosopher, Hegel, spoke of "a criminal's right to be punished." By this he meant to point out that when society punishes a criminal by fine or imprisonment, this acceptance of the consequences of wrongdoing brings to the offender an inner peace and security that can be gotten in no other way.

4. We Church of the Brethren people will recall in this

connection the traditional attitude of our church on secret societies. The essential principle underlying this position was, I think, our fathers' high regard for the truth, championed openly and utterly. So high was this regard that they were skittish about anything that savored of secrecy. Secrecy suggested that the truth needed to be protected, manipulated, managed. All that the truth requires is that we should commit our lives to it. It will care for us; it will make us free.

5. Reference has been made to trends, movements and conventions in the presence of which individual men seem to be helpless. Apparently there is nothing to do but to go along with them. The words *seem* and *apparently* are used advisedly here. The necessity is only apparent; it is not real. Vast trends and movements cannot wash out the man who will not submit to them. The individual soul possesses something which no power on earth can crush. It is possible for moral man to live in immoral society. We can be "in the world and not of it." Jesus prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Our government wisely recognizes this truth in making provision for the conscientious objector. There is an area of personal responsibility that no power on earth can violate or invade.

#### IV

THE ultimate basis on which personal responsibility rests is the eternal truth that we belong to God. The prophet Ezekiel puts it in these words, "All souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Immanuel Kant puts us upon solid ground here. Our physical senses, he says, can reach the phenomenal world, that is, the

world of appearance. Pure reason plays only upon the surface. We are not left, however, without access to the real world, the world of God and freedom and immortality. Through our sense of duty, the deep conviction, "I ought," we feel God's hand upon us. In this matter of personal responsibility all considerations of prudence, caution, pleasure or whatever, fade to nothing. The powers and persons the world honors are of little consequence. Two considerations—only two—enter here: God and the human soul. All souls are God's and are, therefore, responsible to him.

## *Remove Not the Landmarks*

VERNON F. MILLER

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*Proverbs 22:28*

IF you have been at Conference on Sunday—"the big day"—then you know the strange feeling of fellowship which comes over you at the mere mention of Conference Sunday. You visualize the hundreds of little clusters of friends talking of old times and discussing future plans. You can feel the vibration of ten thousand voices as they unite in the favorite hymns of the church, praising their heavenly Father. At noon the Conference grounds give the impression of a huge family reunion. Truly it is the yearly reunion of the spiritual family of the Brethren.

Annual Conference is more than a social reunion, however. In its sessions, important decisions have been made. Great movements have been given life and carried on. Our thoughts are turned back into the past. At Conference time we like to recall the heritage which is ours.

At Bethany Biblical Seminary there is a little nook in the library which is known as the Brethren Alcove. One day I was looking over some copies of the Pilgrim, an early Brethren paper published during the 1870's. On each copy of this paper there was a Bible verse which

particularly attracted my attention. It was: "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set." I discovered that these words were in Prov. 22:28.

To understand what was meant by this warning we need to look at the Hebrew culture in which it was written. To the Hebrews a landmark was precious and sacred. A landmark was erected to commemorate a very special occasion. A landmark was a marker or a guide for the use of the blessings which God had given. It was a covenant between man and man and between man and God. Looking back over our Brethren heritage we can see landmarks of life to guide us in the complex problems of our day. These living landmarks should be sacred and precious to us. They will lead us to proper covenant relations with our fellow men and with our God.

OUR Brethren fathers built the first landmark at the very time they established the church. They had come from the old land of the creedal and ritualistic churches, just as Abraham came out of the land of the Euphrates. That group of eight at Schwarzenau set up the landmark that the living Christ should be our only creed and the record in the New Testament our only pattern for personal and church life. There should be no man-made creed or formula. Our fathers also suggested that as future generations came they would have new problems to face and that they should have freedom to apply the teachings of Christ and the New Testament to those new problems. A man-made pattern would limit them to the interpretation of the period in which the creed was made. This principle of progressive revelation called forth high praise from even Benjamin Franklin in his Autobiography. This then is the first great landmark which our Dunker forefathers set up for us: the living Christ should

be our only creed and the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount, should be our only pattern.

Soon after the Brethren came to America, they found themselves confronted with a new problem. In solving this problem they set a landmark which has been extremely significant to us down through the years and particularly on Conference Sunday. In the year 1741, Count Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravian Church, came into the section of eastern Pennsylvania where the Brethren were located at that time. There were several Protestant, German-speaking churches in that area. Count Zinzendorf desired to form one church organization of all the Mennonite, Brethren, Moravian and other similar groups. The Brethren chose Martin Urner and several others from their group to represent them at the conference which the count called. They listened to the plans and were asked what the Brethren would do.

Here was a matter of church policy to be decided. These elders who had been chosen could have taken the responsibility upon themselves and made the decision. Rather, what they did in that situation is a living landmark to guide us today. They showed that the Brethren were all members of one spiritual family. They called a Big Meeting at Martin Urner's farm. The matter of business was presented to the whole group, which decided not to join Count Zinzendorf's group. There was more than business transacted at that meeting, however. They all ate together around the same tables. They talked about crops, friends and the weather. It was the first reunion of the Brethren family.

H. L. Hartsough has made the comment that we Brethren do not realize that our plan for Annual Conference is unique. Likely there is not another church group in American Christianity in which everyone of the many

members of the church is urged to attend its conference. It is just this which has maintained a fellowship rather than developing a hierarchy. It is because of the contacts at Annual Conference that such chosen leaders as C. D. Bonsack and M. R. Zigler can know personally hundreds of members who would never be on any special committee. We must not remove this landmark of a democratic family conference.

A THIRD landmark which our fathers have set before us carries this ideal of brotherhood to those outside our immediate fellowship and even to those outside our immediate race and color. History books record that William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* of 1831 was the beginning of the antislavery movement in the United States. Yet as we look into the lives of our Dunker forebears we find that they had long years before surveyed the field of race relations. They set stakes which required brotherhood with all races. Seventy-three years before the first issue of Garrison's *Liberator* one of the Brethren published a book against slavery. In 1781 the Big Meeting ruled that no member could own or trade in slaves. We cannot point to any particular movement which the lowly Dunkers started that abolished slavery. Yet many years before the general public saw the answer they had set the marker. Who knows but that by such small groups holding up the ideal the whole country saw the light? Did not Jesus say, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven"?

ANOTHER area where the living landmark of our forefathers' lives shed light on the world is in that of man's attitude toward the physical body which God has given

him. The Brethren, taking the words of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, have regarded the body of man as the temple of God. Therefore, they could not do otherwise than oppose the use of alcoholic beverages. In their lives and in their teachings they built a landmark for temperance. The temperance movement is usually regarded as having begun with John Gough's Washingtonian Society in 1840. Yet Bro. John S. Flory tells us in his book, *Flashlights from History*, that nearly a hundred years earlier, in 1741, the Brethren were lecturing and publishing tracts and articles against the use of alcohol. In 1783 Annual Meeting decided to "withdraw Christian fellowship from all members who refused to put away their distilleries."

In the very beginning the Brethren built a landmark upon the principles of Jesus which they found in Matthew 18. Next to the Sermon on the Mount it has become the passage in the New Testament that perhaps is most characteristic of the Brethren. In their personal relations with one another and with their neighbors the early fathers applied Matt. 18, using the peaceful method of settling differences and conflicts of interests. The lives of early leaders such as Alexander Mack, John Naas and Christopher Sower set the standard of living at peace with all men. They also hold this up as the ideal for the nations. For several generations they, with the Quakers, the Mennonites and others here and there, held up the ideal alone. The world has not yet accepted the ideal to which our fathers long ago staked their lives. Perhaps the increased interest on the part of other churches and the widespread interest on the part of people generally in a just and lasting peace are an indication that the ideal is desired if not yet accepted.



The late Arthur E. Holt of the Chicago Theological Seminary has been considered by some as a prophet of our times. A few months before his death I heard him make this amazing challenge to the historic peace churches. After reviewing the significant religious eras of the past he said that it may well be that the historic peace churches will carry the torch which will lead all others in the next great Christian movement in America. If this be true, then we must not remove the landmark of our fathers.

IN the history of our church we see yet another landmark set by the lives of those who have gone before. It is in the field of our attitude toward power and influence, material and showy things in the world. The answer of the early Brethren was one of nonconformity. It was symbolized by the strict order of dress. By this means the Brethren expressed the fact that they were living the simple spiritual life. They were living only the life of the kingdom. We have dropped the symbol to a large extent in our churches. Perhaps in our lives we have let the landmark of the simple spiritual life crumble and fall. Yet as we see worldly things and power failing to bring man happiness we are realizing that looking to the spiritual values in life is worth while. We of the church must not overlook this significant landmark.

FINALLY, the early Brethren set the landmark of the "good life." America claims to be a Christian nation because of the thousands on the church rolls and all those who come to church to fill the pews on Sunday. The Brethren have set the landmark that a man's life shows his devotion rather than his formal affiliation with some organization. The life one lives determines whether he

is following the pattern set by Christ and the New Testament. The "good life" is seen from Sunday to Sunday rather than on Sunday from eleven o'clock to twelve.

These are the landmarks which our fathers have set before us: Christ and the New Testament as our only creed; a democratic familylike Conference; no slavery of any race; temperance; peace; simple, spiritual living; and the good life. We will do well to heed the warning of the wise man of old who wrote the proverb: "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."

Let us also remember that there are many new fields of life where we must be setting up new landmarks to guide our children in the uncertain days of the future. For them we must build guideposts to economic sharing, unity of all nations, racial brotherhood, fellowship between all churches, and simple, harmonious urban living or cultured, good rural living.

Let us remove not the landmarks which our fathers have set. Let us live ahead of our time today, so that we may be living landmarks to the Brethren of tomorrow.

# *Heaven*

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THE Christian faith is built around a few fundamental doctrines. Men do not always agree on the details relative to these doctrines; neither do they agree fully as to just how many and which doctrines are fundamental. But all are agreed that a faith to be real must be based on some absolutes. To disagree on details is not to deny a fundamental doctrine. The Christian's belief in heaven is to him one of the fundamental doctrines of his faith.

The church of a half century ago talked a great deal about heaven. A study of the hymnbooks used by the church at that time shows that men sang more of this doctrine then than they do today. Ministers preached more concerning it. It is possible that the church of a half century ago sang and preached too much about heaven. It is also possible that we today sing and preach this theme too little. To serve primarily for the sake of attaining a goal is not the highest ideal or motive for Christian conduct; yet to set a goal before man is not bad, for it is a human characteristic to strive more diligently when there is a goal in view.

Many sermons on heaven have been based largely on the thought of a material home: its size, location and nature. Jesus had something entirely different in mind. He

spoke often of the place, and to him it was a state of being far beyond the imagination, a place that could not be compared or even imagined by man. He finally reminded his followers, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." He recognized the need for such a place, and reminded his followers over and over again that such a place was in store for them.

### *Our Concept of Heaven*

MAN's concept of heaven has generally been built around his heart's desire. It is only natural that the "men of the East" should have described their heaven as a city of pearly gates and golden streets, that they should picture a great white throne and many mansions. Heaven was to the American Indian a happy hunting ground. The famous play, *Green Pastures*, describes the life of an underprivileged race, a people that has oftentimes been hungry, and one that has not been permitted to enjoy many of the things of life that others enjoy; so it is not strange that the author pictures heaven as the place of the great fish fry.

Robert Browning has stated beautifully man's idea of heaven in the lines entitled *Our Changing Thought of Heaven*—

*Life changes all our thoughts of heaven;  
At first we think of streets of gold,  
Of gates of pearl and dazzling light,  
Of shining wings, of robes of white,  
And things all strange to mortal sight.  
But in the afterward of years  
It is a more familiar place;  
A home unhurt by sighs and tears,  
Where waiteth many a well-known face.  
With passing years it comes more near,*

*It grows more real day by day;  
Not strange nor cold, but very dear—  
The glad homeland not far away,  
Where none are sick and none are lone,  
A place where we shall find our own.*

Probably as satisfying a concept of heaven as one can have is to think of heaven as a land of no limitations, a land where one can realize his fondest dreams and is not restricted by human handicaps and hindrances.

#### *Why I Believe in Heaven*

My first reason for believing in heaven dates back to the teachings of my early life, the teachings of my home and my church, the story of heaven as told so often in the Bible. To many this is proof enough, but it does not need to be our only proof of heaven, for there are other evidences to strengthen our early belief. The simple faiths of childhood are often disturbed with advancing years, and fortunate it is that here, as in most of the teachings of Jesus, there is a reasonableness present that is most satisfying.

My second reason for believing in heaven lies in the universal yearning in the human soul for such a place. Many yearnings exist in man, and it seems that back of every yearning is the ability to meet it. We yearn for love, food, home, security and scores of other things, and for every yearning there are means for satisfying it. Certainly the Creator would not place in the heart of man that universal yearning for a heaven and eternal life if he had not likewise placed with man a means of attainment.

The book entitled *The Doctor and His Patient*, by Dr. Arthur E. Hertzler, abounds in cynical statements relative to the Christian church, its program, and its shortcomings. One cannot read the book without being con-

vinced that the author must doubt all things for which the church stands; but, as is very often the case, we find appearing in the closing paragraph of his book this universal longing for a future life. In this paragraph the author, speaking of his beloved daughter whose life was taken when she was a young woman, states: "I just know somewhere I shall meet my girl again."

A third reason for my belief in heaven and eternal life rests in the discovery of science that the Creator is most careful of all that he has created. You cannot destroy through any known means the physical things of this universe. You can change their form, but to destroy them is not within your power. Man is dual in his nature, physical and spiritual, and who is there who in thinking of his closest friend would consider the physical the more important part? The personality, the spirit, the soul of man is the part of greatest worth. I do not believe that God would allow a great soul to develop and exist for only a day, and save eternally the material things that housed that soul.

In the fourth place, I believe in heaven because justice demands that there be such a place. I go into a children's home and there I find crippled, blind, deformed, homeless children, born in a world in which they are not wanted, a world that means only pain and suffering. Could it be possible that they should never know anything better? I see the lives of innocent men, women and children end long before their time, and many times these deaths are due to the greed of other men. Must this condition too not find an answer in a heaven to come? I see resulting from a wicked economic system millions deprived of many of the necessities of life, while others revel in luxuries and squander the things that were meant to bring life. Yes, there is a heaven; there has to be.

*What a Belief in Heaven Does for Folks*

It is satisfying to strive toward a goal if one feels that he may ultimately attain it. This principle has been thoroughly demonstrated in almost every area of life. Men always strive for a goal, and the greater the goal the greater the satisfaction attained in the struggle. Some men work for money as their major goal; others find their goal in service, or in the creation of things of beauty or worth, but always there is a goal, and the whole of life is different because of this interest.

Man does his best work when he sees in life a great purpose, and a belief in heaven gives purpose to every act. The surgeon whose life is dominated by a great purpose is a greater surgeon because of his belief in heaven. He may suffer more because of uncertainties and errors in his work, but because of his concern he is repaid for his successes in greater joy and satisfaction.

A belief in heaven removes the fear of death. To the Christian death should be looked forward to as the greatest experience in all life. This is not saying that one should not enjoy life and cling to it, but only suggesting that in death the Christian sees, not the end of all, but only the end of this that has been beautiful and the entering into a beauty that as yet has not been dreamed. A belief in heaven makes a man's last days his best days. He goes to his grave, not of all men most miserable, but, rather, rejoicing in hope.

*Means of Reaching the Christian Goal*

ONE of the last remarks of Jesus to his disciples was "You know the way to the place where I am going." Certainly very soon after the death of Jesus there came to the minds of the disciples other words that had recently come from the Master's lips, such words as: "Believe in

the Lord Jesus," "He that believeth and is baptized," "Seek ye first the kingdom," "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not," and many other statements and teachings similar to these. In these we discover the way to the ultimate goal of the Christian.

We are living in a very practical and needy world; in fact, so practical and needy that one cannot find complete satisfaction in speaking only in general and theological terms. Conditions in the world in which Jesus lived were similar to those in our world today, and we find him not only urging upon his followers that they have faith in him, but stating beautifully, "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, . . . naked and ye clothed me, sick and ye visited me," an invitation to share the good things of life with those less fortunate.

I see in the Christian church the way whereby men attain the great goal of their Christian faith. Accept Jesus Christ, endure to the end, and "do the works of him that sent me."



# *God and Nature*

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## *Psalm 104*

SINCE we are subject to the laws of the material earth, we will be wise to appropriate from nature those things that will enable us to live more effectively. Among her lessons are honesty, beauty, simplicity, variation, patience, adaptability, activity, sacrifice and devotion, and brotherhood.

### *What Nature Tells Us*

(1) THERE is a fundamental honesty in nature that man has not yet excelled. "No blade of grass has broken a law of God, no flower has ever blushed with guilt, no tree lifted its leafy crown against the Creator, and no bird or insect has ever plotted against the Almighty" (Furbay). Nature is without sin. Man, with the power of a god placed in his hand, clubbed his brother to death because of jealousy. The brutes of forest and plain kill for protection and food. Never has a herd of antelopes been bound by any form of contract to support a family of lions.

Nature is shot through and through with laws and prin-

ciples and organization. What power there is in an organization when all the paths of energy are parallel! In this physical world all bits of energy make up the atoms, of these are the molecules, of these the elements, then rocks, and finally planets and suns and galaxies. Nature is dependable. Planets and suns wing their ways along distant paths so accurately that man, since he has found the key to their movements, can plot their courses for a thousand years to come.

(2) There is beauty in nature that is hundreds of miles wide, thousands of miles long and millions of miles deep. The spatial beauty of the outdoors leads to worship more than all the flat canvasses that have ever been made by men's hands. Never yet have the deep meanings, exquisite details, and vast reaches of mountains and oceans, prairies and the overhead blue been committed to marble and paint. Nature's is the beauty of reality (Psa. 8).

(3) There is a majestic simplicity and directness in the day-by-day living of plants and lower animals. They demand no more than enough food, they accept the protection they find and respond to racial dictates on reproduction. Man, all too often, lives no higher, spiritually, than these other animals, but demands more for his gratification on their levels. He requires richer and more highly refined food, houses and clothing out of all proportion to adequate protection, and finally exemption from all responsibility for the generations to come. To these demands he adds personal entertainment and various dissipations, even stooping at times to garner a thrill from the slop jar of the yeast family.

(4) There is almost unlimited variation in nature. One can hardly escape being humbled when face to face with nature's demonstrations of color and harmony, variation and sameness, and power. Through lenses we explore

the heavens and discover celestial bodies so distant that it takes light a half-billion years to come to us. We use other lenses and see tiny particles of life as much smaller than the littlest thing we can see with the unaided eye as a mouse is smaller than a whale. We learn that the tiniest living thing is composed of thousands of molecules and these of still more atoms. These atoms are as far from being solid bits of matter as our solar system. In point of size we find ourselves a dizzy distance from either the core of the atom or the colossi of the ether.

(5) Nature is exceedingly patient. One need but think of the silent, steady dropping of animal skeletons to the bottoms of the seas to build layers of limestone thousands of feet thick, or the rains of dust that in west China built mountains a mile high and hundreds of miles long to learn this. With little display nature bends and wrinkles a continent and makes a range of mountains. Even in North Manchester, Indiana, we cannot escape for we are on a huge geological teeterboard which is warping the Great Lakes region at the rate of five inches of change in elevation per hundred miles per hundred years. Pretty slow, yes, but it takes only time in addition to change the face of the earth.

(6) Nature teaches nothing if it does not teach adaptability. "As changeless as the everlasting hills" is a human generalization that applies to nothing on earth. As climate and soils change, the plants must follow after. If they cannot change with the environment they die. Size is no guarantee of survival. Tons of dinosaur bones are mute evidence of this. The animal encased in armor plate may find the going impossible when his favorite lake has dried up or the warmth of perennial summer has been exchanged for winters with ice and snow. "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

(7) Nature is never at a standstill. She is always dissolving something or crystallizing it, producing mutations or recombinations, varying pressures, elevations, temperature, light—trying this and that, never satisfied, never discouraged. Nature has definite methods for the production of new and more adequate forms of life and for their elimination when they have become outmoded. Those that cannot change, or do so too slowly, are destroyed. Nature cannot endure the paralysis of the institutionalizing process.

In nature nothing escapes the principle that every act leaves an effect. There may be forgiveness, but what is done is done. The effects of injuries long forgiven and forgotten may at any time arise to plague the unfortunate. The forgiving grass grows green over the battlefield, but underneath there are identification plates and soft wooden crosses. Man's interference with the plans and processes of nature are never overlooked. He pays sometime in dust bowls, floods, famines, plagues, death.

(8) Sacrifice and devotion are observed in nature in flawless fashion. The first four of the Ten Commandments are implicitly followed in every phase of life. Only the necessary things are done, God's name is not taken in vain, no idols are erected, nor is obeisance made to a multiplicity of deities. No sect among all the religions has done better.

(9) The last six commandments have to do with brotherhood. They are not dogmatic restrictions made by an all-powerful deity, but fundamental laws of social relationships selected and enforced among all levels of beings and verified by all manner of experiences since the time that life began. It is truly said that only those animals that most closely conform to the Decalog are in group life continuously successful.

These six commandments teach us, as does nature, that it is a waste of time and energy for the inexperienced to disregard the learning of those who went before; that killing one's own kind could lead to the final destruction of the whole group; that if all stole none would have food and protection and all would die; that lying destroys confidence and thus destroys brotherhood and co-operation; that coveting, that "frothy watering of the heart," may lead to anything—lies, adultery, theft, murder. These commandments make clear the way to live effectively. Man can as well hope to destroy them as he can hope to blast the sun with an air gun.

*Finding God (Psa. 61:1-2)*

THERE is something creative in man's occasional retreat from the artificiality of the city to the natural forests, prairies and mountains. Nearly all of us like to get outdoors, but we seldom wonder or realize why. The urge that comes to us is much like that which finally compels the oriole to forsake the land of plenty in the South for an unknown journey to the North.

In nature there are fewer things of questionable value to attract us. It was none other than Socrates who after wandering along the streets of Athens said, "I thank the gods that there are so many things I do not want." Nature never teaches worry, or how to rehash past troubles, or the reconstruction of emotions after the crisis is past. In nature there is a strict application of the ancient injunction, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

When we do visit the great outdoors we very often prevent any possible good to ourselves by taking along with us the very things that have been wearing us down. We take our social tensions, economic problems, pets, telephones, newspapers, radios, magazines, animosities and worn-to-a-frazzle associates. We are doing little more

than exchanging one place of suffering for another. Instead of visions of beauty of forest and ocean and sunset, we scan the news sheets for accidents, scandals and market fluctuations. Instead of silently listening to the orchestra of the woods we tune in on the radio and soon a jazz bug stings us in the ear.

Our bodies and spirits love the fields and lakes, but our jittery brains will not let go of jobs and bonds and books and trinkets. Our gray matter "lies down and plays tired" when privation looms ahead. We lose our places as leaders when demands for personal pleasure and attention become the ends for which we strive.

Man seems to be one part of creation that has a natural taint of lawlessness. The possibility of being destructive seems to go along with that of being constructive. Man has the power of balancing effects and choosing a course. Intelligence is not only an opportunity but a terrifying responsibility. Man had better look well into the areas in which he lives and conquers. His successful conquests and pleasurable utilization of the treasures of the earth, together with the exalted place given to facts and machines, may constitute a despotism that one day will reduce him to insignificance. The developments in world events today indicate that even now we may be getting a late start in saving ourselves. Nature does not provide us with a perfect plan for living, but it does provide a source of help in our efforts to find the way.

In the rocky canyons of the outdoors we see God more readily and more clearly than in the rocky canyons of the city, even though these canyons be bordered with burning candles and stained-glass windows. God, however, walks also in the city. He is found in the personalities and contributions of the great souls of all time. But outdoors, in the sanctuary he himself made, he anxiously waits to

give a fuller revelation of himself, of how he works, of how things should be done, of old-fashioned virtues that all should possess, and of his hopes for functional human brotherhood in the days that are to come, when the lights that have so nearly gone out shall shine again around the world. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

## *"Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself"*

LELAND A. NELSON

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*Matthew 22:37-40*

JESUS was greatly concerned with man's relationship to God and with man's relationship to man, for these are basic to life and security. If these basic relationships are what they ought to be, then everything else will be what it ought to be. The entire law of life is summed up in these two principles. The fundamental necessity in maintaining the proper relationships with God and man is love. As Kagawa has said, love is the law of life. Only as one loves completely can he have the right relationships with God and man.

I am greatly encouraged at the recent emphasis being put upon the importance of a spirit of brotherhood. Recently much has been said about the need of such a spirit nationally and internationally. During Brotherhood Week much is said to promote and encourage this. I only pray that the church will not shirk its responsibility in this moment, when the world needs so sorely for her to lead out in this spirit of love and understanding.

Actually the fate of the world is hanging in the balance. As a world we are today where our nation was almost a



century ago. Again it may well be said, "United we stand, divided we fall." Truly neither a house nor a world divided against itself can stand. We must learn to live together as brothers, according to the purposes of our Creator, or we shall cease to live at all. The hour is at hand when Christians must take seriously the basic law of life, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Paul said, as did Jesus, that this sums up all of the law and the prophets.

For our purpose it is unnecessary to spend time answering the question put to Jesus regarding who one's neighbor is. The progress of science and invention has made our world so small that we all must admit that we now live in a single world neighborhood. Our problem is not that of defining who is our neighbor; ours is the task of actually beginning to love our neighbor as we do ourselves.

We shall never be able to do this until we can see our fellow man through the eyes of Jesus. In all things we need to strive to possess the mind of Christ, and until we do we cannot succeed in loving our fellow man as we ought to love him.

In the eyes of Jesus the world is made up of a single family of sacred personalities, of whom God is the loving Father. All men are of supreme worth. All have been created in the image of God, whether they be red or yellow, black or white. All are of infinite worth and possess marvelous possibilities of development.

Jesus placed a value on the soul of man above everything else. All other values and institutions were of inferior worth in the sight of the Master, even the great institution of the state. Never should we as Christians approve making the individual the tool of the state.

Jesus views the human body as something sacred. As Paul has expressed it, our bodies are the very temples of God. As such they are extremely sacred and precious. We must never abuse or destroy human life. Jesus more than upholds the command, "Thou shalt not kill," for to kill man under any conditions at any time is to destroy the temple of God. It is to destroy the most precious element of all creation. As I understand Jesus, I am sure he would never justify the destruction or the abuse of human life by any method—war included. Regardless of color, facial characteristics, and other peculiarities, all men are brothers, for God has made us of one blood, and he is the Father of us all, who is above us all, in us all, and through us all. God has created us as one large family, and our family can come to its own only as we live as good members of God's home. This implies that no matter how erring or wayward a child may become, still as his brothers or sisters we maintain our love and respect for our brother.

With this incomplete picture of Jesus' view of man let us pursue further what it means for us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

It means that we must always possess a spirit of forgiveness. We must be able to pray constantly, "Father, forgive them," about any and all of the peoples of our world, remembering that if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Father in heaven forgive our trespasses. Before we can truly love our neighbor as ourselves we must be filled with a spirit of forgiveness.

How often does that mean one must forgive the outrages of fellow men and nations? We must do it eternally. Jesus indicated this in his saying not seven times, but seventy times seven. Our forgiveness of our fellow men must be as enduring as the forgiveness of God toward us.

A soldier back from the South Pacific, when asked about these "filthy Japanese" and what he thought ought to be done to them, said: "I think we ought to give them a chance." He went on to say that he did not blame them entirely, for we have failed to give them Christ. This soldier said that he planned to train himself to become a missionary and to go back and give them Christ.

We need more spirits like that within these lives of ours. It is often asked just how far forgiveness ought to go. To be Christian it must go to the uttermost, even when a German or a Japanese kills one we love.

An American soldier in Germany killed a young German soldier. In grief and remorse he prayed about it. He talked with his commanding officer and his chaplain, and then finally he went to the little town in Germany where the boy's mother lived. He told her he had killed her son. Then he said that she could take his life, or do anything that would repay the debt. But he added, "If you can forgive me, I will be a son to you as long as I live after the war." And that German mother with tears in her eyes looked into the face of the American boy and said, "Son," and he replied in tears, "Mother." There must be more of that kind of forgiveness if we are to build world brotherhood. We all must learn to practice this teaching of Jesus: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Do you ask why? "That ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven."

The test of our Christian love is not in loving those who love us or want to be loved, but in loving the unlovely.

I remember talking with a lovely woman a couple of years ago. She had been married for about twenty-eight years. She had a fine family, and most of her children

had married; then her husband ran off with a young girl. Her friends and neighbors could not say enough mean things about the man, and were free in expressing what they thought she ought to do to him. She told them all, "But I love him. If he will come back and settle down, I'll go with him anywhere he would want to go in the world." There is the test of love—what happens to it when it is crucified.

Loving our neighbor means more than forgiveness; it also means service. We can not express our love in words and pious phrases; we can do it only through service. Genuine love compels people to minister unto the needs of others. If we love our neighbor as we should, then we will meet his needs in the spirit of the good Samaritan, even though "the Samaritans have no dealings with the Jews." No matter how much a neighbor has wronged us, in the spirit of Christian love we must always be ready to bind up his wounds.

Japanese and German people are starving to death by the millions, and yet when my senator is asked to support legislation to send food to them or even to let churches send food to them he replies that the American people do not want them to have food, that they want them to suffer. That is certainly not the spirit of Christ. We can never build a better world on such a foundation. If we love our neighbor as we should we will stretch every nerve to see that such food blockades are broken. It is a good thing to alleviate hunger and suffering, but that is not enough if we truly love our neighbor as ourselves. We must go further and remove the cause. It is a good thing to be kind to a slave, but it is better to abolish slavery. It is a good thing to bind up the helpless victims of war, but it is a better thing to abolish war. It is a good thing to set up a W.P.A. in time of unemployment, but it

is better to abolish those practices and systems which cause unemployment. It is not enough to recognize the wrong in systems; we must do something about it.

If we love our neighbor as ourselves it must show itself in a spirit of evangelism, in a genuine concern to give our brothers Christ. The danger here often lies in that we want to give Christ only to our brother across the ocean and not to the one next door.

The evangelistic spirit I am speaking of here is not the concern to add numbers to the church roll, but that deep concern to change the inner lives of people with the love of Christ. We cannot do this through talking, or by giving or sending money alone; it must be done through expressing our genuine Christian love for our fellow man in forgiveness and service.

A statement which I read the other day that has provoked a great deal of thinking on my part is this: "You are no closer to God than you are to the person for whom you care the least."

All of us have seen a large boiler in a school, a church or a factory. It is impossible by looking at the boiler to tell how much water is in it. On the front there is a little glass tube called a gauge. This indicates the amount of water in the boiler. It is likewise impossible by looking on the outward appearances of men to say how much they love God. Neither can we judge by their words. But the love we express toward our brothers is a gauge which indicates our love for God.

A man asked Jesus one day what the most important thing in the world was. Jesus made answer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind. This is the first and the greatest commandment, and the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

## *Fools for Christ's Sake*

JACOB F. REPLOGLE

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*We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised (1 Corinthians 4:10)*

THESE sharp and biting words of Paul cut deeply. The righteous pride of the Corinthian brethren was deflated. Did they have much of which to be proud? He was despised. Were they strong? He was weak. Were they wise in their own conceit? He was classed as a fool for Christ's sake.

In his letters to the Corinthians, Paul uses the words fool and foolishness at least sixteen times. On eight of these occasions he uses fool or fools. In the midst of pagan debaucheries and Greek philosophies, Paul declares: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:18-19). The call is to be a fool for Christ's sake.

Anyone who would observe a chaste and pure morality in Corinth was a fool. "To live as a Corinthian" was a common phrase in those days, referring to the basest of immoral conduct. The church was divided into rival

groups and he who did not take sides was a fool. Here was a group for Apollos, here a clique for Cephas, here a band for Paul. The Corinthian who did not think of himself and exploit others for his own selfish gain was a fool. He who did not think himself superior to other men and brethren was a fool. Even concerning the love feast, Paul had to warn them, in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, that the rich were not waiting for the poor smelly fishermen, but were eating all the food and leaving. "Tarry one for another" is the admonition. "Yes," said Paul, "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

It has always been so. Says Dr. Charles Boss of the Methodist Church: "Ever men of faith have been 'fools for Christ's sake.' They pit the love, wisdom and power of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, against man's greed, lust for power and violence."

CHRIST was classed as a fool for taking the way of suffering love. His own family thought that he was beside himself. Recall that while he was in a house with his disciples, his mother and brothers and sisters came and knocked on the door. They sent a message in to Jesus urging him to come out and go along home with them where they might keep an eye on him.

The things that Jesus said sounded utterly foolish. Listen: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." What foolishness! Everyone knows that it is better when people pat you on the back and tell you what a good boy you are. This foolish babbling goes on: "Blessed are the meek." What tommyrot! To the victor goes the spoil. The meek are weaklings, and the only thing they will inherit is a grave. We today do not

believe the words of Christ. We are spending billions and are daily making atomic bombs, believing that the strong will inherit the earth. "Blessed are the merciful." Again what foolishness! We do not believe this either. Show no mercy! Kill or be killed. Let the world starve. Decrease the calorie consumption of the Germans. This is realism, we say. Anything else is folly. "Blessed are the pure in heart." How utterly ridiculous! Today we say, "Blessed are you when you go the limit and do not get caught. There is no such thing as purity! Only a fool would believe and say such things."

ONLY a fool would refuse the gifts of Satan. Was not Christ the Son of God? He was hungry and here were stones that he could make into bread. Only a fool would go hungry. Not to use power and the spectacular, when he had the power to bring the kingdom of God, was foolishness. Christ could have called down legions of angels to deliver him, and yet he did not. Here was an innocent man willingly dying the death of a criminal on the cross, "and he never said a mumbling word." Everything which Jesus did, viewed from the eyes of this world, was foolish. But because of his divine foolishness, we live.

The early Christians were fools for enduring persecution and dishonor for Christ's sake. Any man would be a fool to take the chances which they took when the odds were so against them. In the book, *The Emperor's Physician*, we see the foolishness of the followers of the Christ. But as in the novel, *The Robe*, such foolishness of martyrdom sows the seed that makes Dr. Luke Galen and even Sergius Cumanus, the emperor's own physician, follow in the train of the fools for Christ.

These foolish Christians, as Stanley Jones puts it, "matched their capacity to suffer against the capacity of



the Roman Empire to inflict suffering, and they won." They were dumb enough to proclaim the good news even though it meant their heads. They lived for Christ and they died for Christ. Ah, what glorious fools they were! Fools for Christ's sake! They dared not, they could not, play truant to their faith.

THERE was old Telemachus, that fool! All of Rome that day was making its way to the Roman Coliseum to enjoy the gladiatorial fight. They would roar their approval as man fought man to the death for the victor's crown. The stands filled rapidly. The empress with her ladies-in-waiting arrived to occupy the royal box. Old Telemachus, stooped but dauntless, his white beard waving with the breeze, found his seat in the upper tier of the packed stands. With a blare of trumpets, the fighters appeared in the arena below. The white sands glistened as did the swords of the combatants. The fight to the death was on. With every sweep of the sword, the gallery cried for blood. Telemachus could stand it no longer. Arising from his place and hurrying down the aisle, he mounted the railing that separated the spectators from the arena below, crying, "Stop, stop, in God's name, stop!" None seemed to pay any attention to this old man. Some laughed and others howled, "Sit down!" But, instead, Telemachus, this fool, jumped into the pit with the gladiators and tried to part them, "Stop, stop, stop!" The mailed fist of one of the men struck him full in the face and the old man went down. There was a howl of glee from the stands. This was real sport! The old fool should mind his own business! But he staggered to his feet. There was a shout, "Run him through!" There was a glint of steel and the sword found its mark. The old man went down to stay. The white sands were turned crimson with

the blood of the lifeless old man. Now the stands were deathly still. Somehow no one had any taste for more. The empress gathered her garments, and, with her maidens, turned her back on the scene and left the great bowl. Others followed until the Coliseum was empty. Never would another gladiatorial fight be held within its walls. There lies old Telemachus. He gave his life to stop a wrong; a fool for Christ's sake.

So it is today. The call is for fools for Christ's sake. There are enough fools for the world's sake. We have plunged into a world of darkness. The Christian would hold a feeble, flickering candle in the storm. What foolishness when the whole world is darkened to keep the sputtering torch of sanity alive! There is a Chinese proverb, however, which says, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

In a world of reviling, hatred and persecution, the Christian would bless, would love, would bring reconciliation. How foolish it seems—yet through the preaching of such foolishness shall the world find salvation and the real power of the living God.

In a world of dishonesty, drunken with the possession of things, the Christian in humility and trust seeks for a "kingdom whose builder and maker is God." The Christian is fool enough to believe that life "consisteth not in the abundance of things which a man possesseth." Life consists in doing the will of God, in faith, in hope, in love.

Who was the wiser? Was Satan or Christ? Who were the real fools—were the early Christians who clung to their faith even though it meant their lives, or were the Romans, long since dust and rubble in the forgetfulness of time? Was Paul the fool or were the Corinthians, saturated in their own corruptions? The answer is the an-

swer of the ages. "God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world." When the world is at its worst, the Christian must be at his best. It is for you to give that best. The choice to follow Christ may look foolish for those about us, but it has always been so. Yet in that foolishness is the salvation of your soul. In Christ, and Christ alone, shall the world find its way.

Yes, Paul, the fool for Christ's sake, could burst forth into one of the most exalted passages of all literature:

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

# *The Law of Freedom*

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*For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1)*

PAUL marvels that the Galatians should turn aside from their freedom. Until Christ came with his gospel of love they had been bound to the law of Moses. And all the freedom which they had had was within the limits of that law. But Christ came with the law of love, which fulfilled the law of the letter. Consequently they had greater freedom, for response to the higher law freed them from obedience to the lesser law. But then they forsook Christ and returned to the yoke of bondage. After suggesting his disappointment and giving them some exhortation, Paul says, "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

Freedom is one of those good things which men treasure. But today many men, like the Galatians, have lost it. And they fight wars and do many foolish things in order to find it. But what is the principle upon which freedom rests? Perhaps, if we are not to be disappointed in our

search after freedom and if we are not to lose it when we have found it, we should know the answer to that question.

It is my conviction that freedom can be found only in obedience to law, that freedom from lesser laws results from obeying greater laws, and that the greatest law, and consequently the one that brings us greatest freedom, is the law of love which Christ came to bring.

## I

MAN acting in the realm of natural law finds his freedom in obedience to that law.

The fact that man has liberty in obeying natural law is a matter of everyday experience. If you want warmth you put coal on the fire and not gravel, for there is a law that says that coal will burn and give forth heat whereas gravel will not. If you want to develop an energetic body you will eat meat and vegetables, not copper sulphate or arsenic. If you wish to play a beautiful piano solo you are not free to pound the keys in an aimless manner. If you go out driving in your automobile you are more likely to get to your destination if you obey the rules of traffic. And while you are driving down the road sixty miles an hour pedestrians are free to go on breathing only if they stay out of your way.

A corollary to the fact that man has liberty as a result of obeying the law is the fact that he finds unhappiness when he defies law. Laws exist which dare not be transgressed. If they are transgressed dire consequences are in store for the transgressor. If a fish transgresses the law that makes it necessary to stay in the water in order to live it perishes. If a leaf transgresses the law that makes it necessary to get life from the tree it soon finds itself in the gutter. E. Stanley Jones says, "A railroad engine is made to run on tracks, and if it remains on the

tracks, it finds its freedom, pulls its loads, and gets to its destination. But if, in order to gain its freedom, it jumps the tracks, the result is not freedom, but ruin to itself and everybody concerned."\*

The crux of the matter is this: Man does not have to obey law, but if he does not he loses his freedom. If a man puts his hand on a high-voltage wire he will never be free to put his hand on it again.

But in realizing that freedom comes in obedience to law, we do not have the whole picture until we are aware of the fact that our greatest freedom comes in obedience to the highest laws. For example, there is a law that says a man cannot jump higher than about seven feet. And even if he uses a pole he cannot do more than about sixteen feet. Thus, in the light of this law a man knows that he is not free to jump a mountain, and he frees himself from many bruises and frustrations when he becomes aware of this fact. But there are other laws which make it possible for a man to build an airship which can fly in the sky. When the man that tried to defy the law of gravity in order to jump the mountain discovers these laws he is then free to jump the mountain without even touching the top, and, besides, he can take his wife and children along. The distance which the human voice can be heard is another illustration of the same fact. There is a law that makes it impossible for the human voice to be heard more than a few thousand yards. But, by obeying higher laws, man with his transmitter and receiving set can hear the human voice in another continent. Thus we see that to a self that is able to initiate its own activity laws present a challenge rather than a limitation. And it is also evident that awareness of higher laws is a powerful factor in freeing oneself from lesser laws.

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\*E. Stanley Jones, *Abundant Living*, Abingdon-Cokesbury, page 11

## II

Not only in the realm of natural law but also in the realm of spiritual law man finds freedom in obedience.

Spiritual law not only transcends physical law and is therefore able to give man greater freedom, but it is real, eternal and absolute. By the very nature of things man must respond to this spiritual law. The oft-quoted statement of St. Augustine which says that we were created for God, and that we are restless until we rest in him, is not the sentimental oozing of a pious mind. It is a statement of fact. By the very nature of being created in the image of God man is incomplete until he finds fulfillment in response to God. The creature naturally responds to the Creator. If he responds he is free to develop in accord with the reality of his make-up. If he does not he is in the same plight as is a fish out of water.

When Jesus had finished his teaching on the mount he said that whosoever heard his sayings and did them would be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock—when the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house it fell not, for it was on a rock; but that he who heard his sayings and did them not would be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand—when the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house it fell, for it was builded upon the sand. Now, why was it wise for the man to build his house upon the rock? Because by the very nature of things it was necessary to build it there if it was to endure. Why is it wise to do the teachings of Jesus? Because the very nature of things makes it necessary.

God's commands are not something he imposes upon us in a dictatorial fashion without reason. But he seeks to promote our highest welfare. He makes demands of us

because reality being as it is we cannot reach our highest good without obeying his commands. Thus the demands are absolute. The nature of reality would make him a liar if he were to say to us, "It will be all right for you to do as you want to do." His commands do not come like that. He says, "Thou shalt." We have a free choice to obey or disobey. But if we disobey God reality itself is against us.

Does it not become evident then that if we go contrary to spiritual law we hurt ourselves just as surely as the man who transgresses physical law? The eye is free to see if it co-operates with the light from the sun. But suppose it says it will be independent and closes itself against the light. It has then missed its purpose and is useless. Likewise, we are made so that our highest fulfillment comes by working in co-operation with God. If we cut ourselves off our independence is tragedy. Just so, Jesus is the true vine; we are the branches. If we live apart from him we die, for we do not have life in ourselves.

If we look from the individual to society we see that the same thing is true. God has given us principles by which to build a decent economic order. When we reject those principles we have some people with indigestion from overeating while others starve. And following our periods of apparent prosperity we are thrown into periods of depression. Jesus has told us how to live peaceably together. But we have paid little attention to reality as it was presented by him. As a consequence we plow the earth with the machinery of war and sow there bombs, blood, human bones, and scalding tears which are the seeds for another war.

Man has had wisdom enough to discover the laws of the natural realm and in obeying them has found freedom. He has erected great skyscrapers which are able to with-



stand for many years the forces of nature. He has spanned great rivers with bridges which he has built in accord with the laws of nature. He has decimated the distance across the continent by his streamlined trains and automobiles. He is free to sit in his rocking chair and read the news of what happened only yesterday on the other side of the world. And if that seems a bit stale, he is free to turn on his radio and find out what is taking place in Europe today. Man is free to travel in the air, under the water, and on the water. It seems as if he has almost fulfilled God's command to subdue the earth and have dominion over the creatures therein.

But that same man who has learned so well to co-operate with natural laws has not learned the A B C's of co-operation with spiritual laws. He is free to fly in the sky, but he is inclined to use that freedom to lend aid to his destructive purposes. He knows the principles upon which the radio operates, but he yields to the temptation to use that knowledge to guide his airships laden with death to the homes of those whom he calls his enemies. And as a result of using his freedom in the natural realm so unwisely, without respect to spiritual law, man's mind is confused and his spiritual outlook is distorted.

The peace, poise and other princely qualities which mark him as a free man have been taken away by many disconcerting fears—fear of deprivation, fear of enemies, fear of defeat, and fear of death. He has gained the whole world, but what has it profited? He has lost his freedom!

What then are we saying? Simply this: By the very nature of things we must obey spiritual law or perish. It is written in our nature that we must love and respond to God's love. If we do not we transgress the laws by which we have life and are in line to be destroyed. We have the free choice to obey or to disobey God, but if we

disobey him the nature of things is that there is no other alternative than damnation. There is no middle way. We either choose the straight road that leads to life or we take the broad road that leads to destruction. When you curse God the only thing left to do is to die.

### III

IF to be free is to obey law, and if obedience to the highest law brings us the most freedom, what is the highest law which we can obey? Is it not the law of love which Jesus brought? Indeed, to have freedom and avoid destruction there is no other way than to follow Jesus, because he showed us the highest law, the law of love.

Paul said that he found a law that when he would do good evil was present. He wanted to serve the law of righteousness, but found another law in his body which tried to make him serve the law of sin. He cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He could have yielded himself in obedience to the law of sin, and would have found freedom, but it would have been a freedom in bondage. He found freedom in the highest law: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Paul gave himself up to the highest law, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and consequently found freedom from the lower law which bound him in sin and made him cry out in despair.

Jesus brought to us the law of love which makes us free from the law of the letter. He says that on the two commandments of love to God and love to our neighbors hang all the law and the prophets. The truth in the Ten Commandments can no more be defied than can the law of gravity, but love for God and fellow man fulfills all that truth and goes even further.

The free man is the man who obeys law. The wise man is the man who obeys the highest laws. The Christian man is the man who obeys the highest law, Christ's law of love which frees him from the law of the letter.

"For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

# *The Quest for Life*

VERNON F. SCHWALM

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*For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way  
that leadeth unto life and few are they that find  
it (Matthew 7:14)*

SOME time ago I took from the shelves of my library an old college yearbook in which I found the pictures of young people I had known years ago. As I leafed through the pages of this old book I found here and there the pictures of young people who have lived grandly and who had from all outer appearances found life rich and abundant.

The impressive thing about a list of this kind is not the smallness of the number who have found their way to abundant life, but the large number of those who seem to have missed the way.

I do not refer to famous people, people who make the headlines. In every generation there are but a handful who can hope for any earthly immortality, for, as Milton said, "Many must be content to be in the register of God, rather than in the records of men." I refer rather to that richness and abundance of life that may be found in lowly places or in high places by the rare souls who find the secret to it.

Jesus' words would indicate that there are few who find the road. And he implies something of the difficulty involved in finding the way. Leading off from the road to life are many by-paths to confusion, disappointment, and even destruction. To find the way to satisfying life, the right combination of a few important factors is necessary. But the possible wrong combinations of these factors that lead to failure are legion.

The story of the rich young ruler will serve as the framework of what I want to say.

THE young man in the story came to Jesus asking what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life. In his yearning for life this young man typifies all human-kind. Men want life—rich, full, abundant and satisfying life. They want eternal life.

This attitude of yearning for life, present in all men, is especially strong in youth. All normal young persons look forward to life with hope and expectancy. They build themselves dream worlds in the future in which they play a major and successful part. Every young man looks forward, anticipating that at fifty he will be a strong, healthy, successful man, married to a beautiful woman, growing older in the love and respect of his family and his friends. Every young woman looks forward to herself at thirty-five and imagines herself married to a man who is (or was) tall, and dark and handsome. She thinks of herself living in a beautiful home, surrounded by children who are always lovely and clean and good. None ever dreams of himself or herself as sickly, or poor, or a failure, as unloved and unlovable, though many of them will be so.

The hope of a better world and a better life is the discontented yearning of people who long for more abundant

life. To be perfectly adjusted to your environment, so as to be happy in it, whether it is right or not, can only lead to stagnation and decay. Hope for growth and progress comes only when people are unhappy with themselves and their surroundings.

When Horace Bushnell was a man in mid-life, he felt there was something for him in the Christian life he had not attained. So he and his wife prayed for it and waited and watched, as they who watch for the morning. And it came to him after he was past forty. And the work upon which his fame rested was done after this.

Walt Whitman in his great poem, *Columbus*, puts into the mouth of the explorer these words:

*"O, I am sure they came from thee,  
The urge, the ardor, the unconquerable will,  
The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than words,  
A message from the heavens whispering to me even in  
sleep:  
These sped me on!"*

In answer to the question, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Jesus answered, "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." To this the young man said, "Which?" and Jesus answered, "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not bear false witness; honor thy father and thy mother; and love thy neighbor as thyself." This seems to be a summary of the Ten Commandments. Our dreams for life must rest on solid foundations. They must rest on an ethical basis. There are many weak people who build fantastic dream houses. They would like to live in palaces, to hold the reins of power in high places, to pull the levers or press the buttons of industrial empire.

But they do not realize that winds blow fiercely on these high peaks and that life must rest on solid foundations if it is to stand up in the time of storm and stress.

Many a person plans a great, tall superstructure of life, but builds it on a weak foundation. Aaron Burr was one of the most brilliant and promising young men in American history but his life was honey-combed with ethical weaknesses that undermined his career and in the end it crumbled into dishonor. For a while it looked as if the career of Adolph Hitler might make him one of the world's greatest men. But when his ghastly persecution of the Jews began, and when he began to assassinate his former friends and weave a web of lies on which to build his empire, it became evident that his kingdom could not last. If success could crown such immoral practices, then one would have to lose faith in the integrity of the universe. We believe that we live in a universe of moral law. One can no more build a career in disregard of the moral law than he could build the Empire Building in disregard of the law of gravitation.

The commands to which Jesus referred here are not mere man-made rules to deny to men the pleasures of life. They are the recognition of fundamental moral laws, the disregard of which brings failure and sorrow and wreckage to life.

Basic ethical laws are not merely subjective and relative. They are objective realities written into the structure of the universe and in the nature of man, and they are absolute, not relative.

Now and then one finds a young man or a young woman who seems to believe that the way to life is the way of emancipation, by taking off all inhibitions and letting life run the way of impulse, urge and passion. There comes a short time of exhilaration and of seeming freedom, and,

even for a short time, some achievements. But how often have we seen that kind of life crumple and fall before it reaches the noonday of life!

The commands of Jesus are hints of the lines along which life lies for all of us. There may be sacrifice, and self-denial, and hardship along the way and a cross at the end of the road. But along that road lies life—abundant life. He who turns aside to take some other way misses the best that life has to offer.

Failure to keep the commands of Jesus is not always external and observable. Covetousness may be eating like a canker in the inner life of a man long before it becomes evident to those around him. Envy may eat at the heart of an individual before his friends observe it. Impurity of mind and heart may eat its way to the vitals of the inner life of a man before it bears fruit in his outer life. The commands of Jesus are inner, spiritual realities. Hate, lust and covetousness bear their fruitage in the spirit, whether they ever find expression in external life or not. The spiritual history of men is not known by any but the recording angels, but I believe that the spiritual history of every man may have its origin in failure to keep not only the letter but also the spirit of the commandments.

All of life must be ethically undergirded. America cannot go forward to the greatness we dream of unless a strong ethical note runs through our culture. Our religion will be meaningless if it runs off into a vapid mysticism or a vague supernaturalism far removed from the realities of life's problems. Our religion will be powerless if it dwells on ethical considerations alone. Only by a happy union of spiritual mysticism and ethics can our religion cope with the problems of our day.



At this point in the story the young man replied to Jesus, saying, "All these have I kept from my youth up." The young man had a fairly good opinion of himself. At least he did not exactly hate himself. He had kept the commandments and perhaps everything else he could get his hands upon! But there apparently was still a disturbing feeling that there was something escaping him—a sense of unfulfillment—which led him to ask, "What lack I yet?" He could still see the heights that he would not climb. Jesus replied, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow me."

There are two things in this reply of Jesus which I want to notice. Up to now there is no evidence of any social sensitiveness in the man. "What shall I do that I may have eternal life? What lack I yet?"

Though he had lived a moral life, and though he had been negatively good, apparently he was not good for very much. Mere negative goodness that does not kill or steal or commit adultery provides an excellent foundation upon which to build a good life. But it is only a foundation upon which a superstructure can be built. One is not of much force as a Christian until he builds upon this structure some positive virtue.

Jesus put his finger upon his weakness, his unconcern for others. "Go give to the poor." Apparently he had no social concern whatever! He was interested in eternal life for himself. There was nothing in his requests that ever indicated any thought of others.

Many of us in this day of individualism, when the value of the individual has been so much emphasized, seem to think the way to save our lives is to take very good care of them, to wrap them in napkins, figuratively speaking, and to develop them. Colleges have too often been ivory towers, cloisters or observation posts for scholars who

watch the great stream of humanity pass by, studying men as social phenomena, but failing to enter sympathetically into their problems or needs.

How many times God takes a good man and gives him a chance for immortality by putting a great social challenge before him! He did so with Moses; and Moses, the Midian shepherd, "who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," became a household word around the world. He did so with Amos. This shepherd and keeper of sycamore trees from Tekoa is the subject matter of our studies milleniums after his death. God presented Lincoln with a challenge; though the way was long, and the cost high, Lincoln accepted the challenge and today he lives on in the lives and the affections of his people.

"WE are now living in the most revolutionary era in human history with such momentous choices facing us as seldom have faced mankind," says Dr. Fosdick. There is first of all the task of binding up the wounds of the nations, of caring for the wounded, the widows, the orphans; of providing food and clothing and shelter for the millions upon millions of homeless men and women and children all over the world. Here is an opportunity to lose one's life and yet find radiant life. Ray Jordan tells the story of a college student who gave up his holiday parties and took a job in a local post office. With the money he had earned he bought some food and clothing for a family he knew to be in desperate need. The weather was raw and cold. He drove thirty miles to one of the worst slums of Chicago and carried the supplies up four flights of stairs. Eight people were living in two terribly dirty rooms. The father was dying of tuberculosis, and the mother was on the verge of collapse from nervous and physical exhaus-

tion. The six children were literally in rags. As the benefactor left that room and walked down those stairs, he was suddenly sure of the presence of God.

If you want to be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor. There are many who could well afford to forego some personal plans in order to find an outlet to serve the hungry of the earth.

The young man in the New Testament story was confronted with a great choice. He wanted to enter into life. He even wanted to be perfect. But there faced him a great denial. He had to give up his wealth, which he loved more than he loved life. Face to face with a heroic choice, he could not muster enough strength of will to pay the price for victory; and so, sorrowing, he walked off into the darkness of oblivion.

The reason he did not find life was that he could not rise to the moral height necessary to lay hold of life. How near he was to the kingdom when he walked away sorrowing!

Many a young person has heard some great spiritual challenge and felt the urge to that service, and almost decided to lose his life in that cause, and has then forgotten and begun to live a life of safety and security for himself.

Others hear the call to give a life for missions, or for relief, and know that it would be a fine thing to do, but the love of lesser things holds them, and they close their lives and live meagerly ever after.

CHARACTER consists, for the most part, in the multitude of little choices made from day to day, but occasionally a man comes to the parting of the ways where his eternal destiny hangs on the choice he makes. One way leads to abundant life, the other to disappointment and despair.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at its flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries."

In some real sense it is true that "once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide. . . ."

Henry Wright of Yale tells that once he heard Moody at Northfield, and says: "There in the quiet without anyone knowing what was going on, I gave myself to God, my whole mind, heart and body, and I meant it." Ever afterward he was convinced that only in absolute surrender and unquestioning obedience to the will of God was to be found the secret of self-realization. There is no other way to real power and true satisfaction and peace.

Just now, with so many calls that demand self-surrender and service, I beseech you to listen to the call to the heights. I bid you rise, by a mighty effort of the will, to the heights of self-surrender. Yield your lives to what you believe to be the will of God for you, remembering that "narrow is the gate, and straightened is the way that leads to life." And life lies in the way of the cross.

## *God's Co-operative*

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GOD cares for us, and he will do much for us if we are willing to co-operate with him. God has placed each of us on earth as a steward and co-operator in his plan. If we are to handle constructively these beauties and bounties of earth, it must be done on a co-operative basis. This thing is not man-centered, but biocentric. God has placed the care of the surface of this earth in our hands. If we are to co-operate with him in this venture, we must be guided by certain definite principles.

WE must first appreciate his guardianship. God has placed each of us on earth as a guardian. If we are to co-operate fully we must appreciate that guardianship. Christ has told us that to whom much is given, from him much is expected. From the man whom Christ forgave the greatest sin, he expected the most love. To those of us who till the soil, God has given much. He has given of the best that he has for the sustaining of life here on earth, and from us he is expecting much. Not only for our own lives are we guardians, but also for those for whom we are producing the elements that will enrich and preserve life. We must appreciate the guardianship that has been entrusted to us as God's co-operators, as we till the soil made by his gracious hands.

We must also have a sense of our moral responsibility to God, to others, and to our families of the future. God has entrusted the care of this earth to us. We have a responsibility to him much like that which a tenant on a farm has to his landlord. God is expecting great things of us. Not only is God expecting great things of us, but those around us are depending on us for life. It is our wheat, corn and oats that are helping to feed the world's people today. They are depending on us and we should feel that responsibility. We should also think of the people of a hundred years from now and feel that we also owe them something. We should till the soil so that they, too, will have something to feed upon. God has placed in our hands a great responsibility to him, to others about us, and to the people of the future generations.

If we are to be true co-operators with God, we must feel a new sense of responsibility. Man has been draining the soil of its plant food and now it must be replaced. The soil has been so drained of its God-given food that man today has to replace that food by the use of commercial and home-produced fertilizers. Our forefathers never knew what it was to make use of a fertilizer that was manufactured in a commercial plant. Today at planting time it is not an uncommon sight to see empty fertilizer sacks hanging on fence posts. The raising of legumes is another method of replacing plant food which is very commendable. Man must use these methods because the soil is so depleted of the plant food that it will no longer produce well without these aids.

As one drives through the country, he is reminded of another method of losing plant food. Man has been wasteful of the things of God's earth, allowing them to wash away down the river or blow away to another area. This

has come about by improper use of the soil God has given to man for his own benefit. Man has torn up the protective cover of grasses without replacing them, thus allowing the winds to shift the earth's surface about at will. Man has cut the trees from the slopes and the plains without replacing them, thus allowing the swift-running waters to carry the soil down to the rivers. Thinking only of the present, man has been commercializing God's earth. Now he is reaping the result of his thoughtlessness. There would be an abundance if man would only co-operate with God.

MAN has been depleting the country of its wealth in another way. There has been a constant, out-of-proportion migration of the youth to the city. Youth has gone to the city in search of something better. It costs about two thousand dollars to rear a child. The country is handing over to the city this wealth with all accounts paid. Those going to the city are given in the prime of life, for the peak of migration comes between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. Seventy-two per cent of the Iowa farms are owned by others than those living on them. Most of these owners live in the city and are paid rents annually. In many cases those paying for farms are paying the money to persons who live in the city and hold the mortgages. The youth going to the city usually remains there, and when the farm home is sold, takes his share of the money to the city with him. The rural people have become buyers rather than sellers. They are buying more than they once did. The country people in preceding generations made their homespun clothes and used horse-drawn machinery. Today we wear factory-made clothes, farm with factory-made tractors, eat bread baked in large bakeries and other food cooked and canned

at big canneries. Man is taking the wealth from the country and is sending it in large amounts to the city with no opportunity for return.

Can we be co-operators with God in this great enterprise that he has entrusted to us and continue to rob the soil of its plant food, being wasteful by allowing erosion of the soil, and sending the wealth of the land to the city? God has put us here as guardians with a moral responsibility to him, to our fellow men, and to our families. We cannot do this and continue to rob the soil, the handiwork of God for all generations.

WHY should man continue to live on the farms of our land and attempt to be God's guardian of the soil? There are several reasons that seem apparent.

1. Rural people are the mothers and fathers of the race. The city could not exist without its hinterland. The country is producing the future generation. According to the figures of O. E. Baker, chief population statistician of the United States, ten couples living in the country will be twenty-eight people in three generations; but the same ten couples living in a city would be three people in the same period of time. Put a wall around Chicago and in fifty years there will be only half as many people living there as now. In the country we will find five hundred and forty-five children under five years of age as compared to two hundred and twenty-five in the city, and it takes three hundred and seventy to maintain the present population. According to Baker it is from the rural people that the children and the leaders of tomorrow are coming.

2. There are more fundamental satisfactions on the farm than thrills. The city can offer color and attractions. It can offer the bright lights of the theaters and the streets.



It can offer larger crowds and a faster life. It can offer fine apartments, and even libraries and parks. These things have a place, but they are artificial and not really satisfying.

Man does not desire a thing until he feels a real need for it. The farm helps him to feel a need for God. The country is natural. It is the way God has made it. It is not man-made and artificial. It is in the midst of God's nature that man finds himself. The final conquest of man is himself, and nature helps him in that conquest because of his closeness to God. It is the rural people's closeness to nature and God that makes them feel a need for him.

The rural home offers some unusual opportunities in the development of character and family co-operation. The surroundings are natural. The whole life cycle is seen as it unfolds from the beginning to the end as rural people work with plants and animals. The members of the family work together; they plan together; they play together. And so they really become intimately acquainted as each member of the family literally senses the heart throbs of the others. They get a genuine satisfaction out of living. There is a certain feeling of security that comes as the farm family working together sees the realization of plans for the winter's need or other necessary supplies. The farm home is truly the best example of the simple but abundant life.

It is the nearness to nature that helps a man to find himself. It is the nearness to nature that helps a man to want to share. It is the nearness to nature that helps a man to realize the simplicity of life.

3. The farmer builds his materials into himself. The materials with which he works become a part of him. He grows the foods and then eats them, thus getting his living from the things which he has helped produce. What more

pleasant odor is there than that of the product as it comes from the raw materials of nature! An apple in the raw is much more pleasing to the eye and the taste than one taken from a tin can. Perhaps the farmer is too close to nature to realize the beauty of the display that is set before him by the handiwork of God.

4. A family needs space and the country is the place to find it. The children are born next to nature. It is not natural for families to be pushed together in apartments. The family needs elbow room. Each individual and each family needs a home. It is very difficult for an apartment in its artificial surroundings to supply the needs of the home and family. Each person needs the influence and training of a home in which the members of the family share and share alike. They need the opportunity to work as a family, share as a family, and live as a family. This takes space, and the country furnishes that space. The family can have the space to have a ball game or other recreation without endangering their lives before a speeding vehicle.

5. The aim of a real farmer is a challenge to any one. A farmer aims to farm well and to provide well. "The real farmer, the one whom we so much delight to honor, has a strong moral regard for his land, for his animals, and his crops." What greater aim could one have in life! Such an aim surely produces in man, God's co-operator, a high motive and a desire for an abundant life.

"EVERY child should have the advantage of a forest. In a forest man listens. He pauses. He finds himself. Great forests were the beginning of things. The open spaces were formerly forests; so why are they not as hallowed as the forests? As one surveys the wonder of God's nature, what is more beautiful than the dotted open spaces

of the countryside? The forests grow slowly and the surfaces change slowly, but there was and is the beginning and there is home somewhere back of every individual." Back of every country home God and man have been working co-operatively, for, as the psalmist has sung, "the earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein."

## *Christian Integrity*

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*"But let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one"*  
(Matthew 5:37)

One of the proudest possessions of the Brethren in by-gone days was their reputation for Christian integrity. Sadly enough, there now seems to be a lost radiance about that term. One hears of it as of a long-departed friend, a glory about which to reminisce but one which is not expected to return.

As we think of the noble quality we so greatly need today, there comes stealing into our memory the vision of strong, broad-shouldered men and toiling but sweet-spirited ladies—all dressed in plain, worn garb; men and women acquainted with the soil and as intimately acquainted with God.

Our generation needs to recover that lost radiance. We must see that it came from a quality of character—the quality of Christian integrity. It is likely that our day knows no greater lack at home or abroad, "in public duty or in private thinking," than that which Jesus seeks to encourage in us, and which was so mightily portrayed in the fathers of our faith.

Our time may be characterized largely by the commonly heard expression: "It's all right if you can get away with it." That spirit is not confined to the gangster and the gambler, or to the overt sinner and the loose woman. That spirit has served as a cover for high school cheating, for lies which we fain would call white, for political chicanery and for the thousands of lightly tossed-off sins of daily life.

A world in anguish cries out for that quality of manhood which will rise up and shout, by precept and example, "But, brother, God himself and all of history are declaring that *you can't get away with it!*" Only men who have shown Christian integrity can say that.

When governmental heads regard solemn treaties as "scraps of paper"; when political candidates refer lightly to promises as "campaign talk"; when military leaders, who hold in their hands the plastic youth of the land, make light of the protests against dens of vice under their protection; when for group gain no qualms of conscience are felt over the starvation of millions—in such times, if ever, there needs to be a resurgence of the power which once made the empires tremble—the power of Christian integrity.

This word *integrity* comes from our more commonly used word *integer*, which means *a whole number*. It is not a fraction or a mixed number; it is not even a proper fraction. It signifies fullness, completion, roundness, perfection, abundance. When applied to life it is that which Jesus called "the abundant life." It is the full, honest, sincere and joyous life of the Christian, contagious and abounding. For this quality of life I seek and I pray that out of the maze of threat, suspicion, half-truth and fearful complexities of our present day there may come order, peace and life for all mankind.

*I. Consider that our generation needs examples of Christian integrity in the spoken word.*

We have become so prone to doubt a man's spoken word that we may ask, "Will you put that into writing?" As though a man's pen is more dependable than his tongue!

Our courts ask, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" They are assuming, rightly at times, that some will seek to leave false impressions by telling partial truths. And so hardened have our courts become to false testimony that they appear shocked or amused when one asserts, "I do not swear; I affirm," which is to say, "I am accustomed to telling the truth always; I do not need to take an oath to tell the truth on specified occasions. I am a man of integrity."

The Chinese character for honesty consists of a combination of several other characters. There is the sign for *man*, and then piled up at its side are the symbols for *mouth* and for *word*. How significant that! "A man standing by the word of his mouth"—that makes for *honesty*. How much meaning there is in that character! It is not enough that one gives proper change, that his measure does not have a false weight, that he does not edge the fence over on his neighbor. The question is: "Does this man stand by the word of his mouth?"

Our laws assume that if a man swears on a Bible he will tell the truth, that he will certainly fear to lie! Some ancient superstition suggested that to place one's hand on the Word of Truth would result in instantaneous death if one should lie. Yet in reality, the truth must be in the heart of man before it can come out.

Jesus roundly declared that we should say "Yes" or "No." To add an oath to it does not make it any more the truth. Let a man's life be of such a character that he will be regarded as a man of integrity whether he is

under oath or in simple and casual conversation. Why is it more important to tell the truth to the judge than to a neighbor? To add, "On the Bible I declare it," or "By God, it is so!" does not make a truth more true or a lie more believable. Then "let your yea be yea; that's enough; anything more is of the evil one."

Certainly, the "man standing by his word" is one who will keep a "bridle on his tongue" as James suggests, so as to keep his speech clean of profanity and filth. Profanity is ever the sign of a feeble and impoverished vocabulary.

No man or woman can claim the right to "damn" any person or thing. Only the divine Judge has that right; let no man think it a light matter to assume the prerogatives of God! Who is that person who dares tell another that he belongs in hell! Such is not simply profanity; it is violating the command, "Judge not lest you be judged; condemn not lest you be condemned!"

One may not fully consider this problem of Christian integrity without a word of caution about our normal conversation. How careful we need to be that we bring only the true meanings in the accounts we relay concerning our neighbors! Full many a life has been blighted by misinterpretations arising out of unfounded rumors.

Here is a splendid young surgeon whose skill and insight have been instruments in the hand of God in the saving of uncounted lives and in the relieving of much misery. Yet this man is being forced out of his situation because of the gossiping based on partial truths. Some day those same tongues may cry out in agony and learn that the one who could have saved their loved one has been driven away because of tales which were passed on, "if you promise not to tell." What a price to pay for the doubtful pleasure involved in tongue wagging!

*II. Our generation needs the Brethren doctrine of integrity in the intellectual realm.*

The unscrupulous lawyer will, for a fee, find loopholes in almost any law you may choose to break. The public character who finds himself confronted by previous statements not now to his liking will be quick to say, "I was misquoted." The money-grabbing physician may make a fortune in the performance of illegal assignments. The minister in pursuit of popularity may readily skirt the issues likely to offend influential persons in his congregation. The scientist may find ample "evidence" to support a half truth if he so wishes.

Yet everyone will sooner or later discover that in sacrificing truth nothing was lost excepting the soul of the one who presided at the altar during the worship of the false god. The man who stands by his word is the man who has the backing of the centuries—for there is God.

Intellectual truth is a possession of the individual. One may sincerely believe a falsehood to be truth, but if a person is determined to find the truth he will eventually come out at the right place. The untruth will not long be covered; but to believe the untruth when one knows it to be untrue is to cover deep in one's mind the seeds which will soon germinate to the utter despair of the soil in which they grow.

Yet because of our unwillingness to abide by the truth and set aside prejudices and favoritisms, we continue to drive further from the goal of national righteousness. Consider, for example, our treatment of minority groups in our nation. Someone thinking of our policies toward the colored races asked a colored schoolteacher: "How can your pupils conscientiously pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States?" The teacher answered, "They do it with mental reservations; they say, 'With liberty and



justice for all,' and inwardly they add, 'For all but me.'"

Our fathers were likely not perfect in their attainment of Christian integrity, but they kept ever before them the goal which was in Christ Jesus. How diligently we need to guard not alone our words but our very thoughts! "The meditations of my heart" as well as the "words of my mouth" call for the continued surveillance of the Spirit of God. "My God, help me so to speak that I may, with head high, stand by my word!"

### *III. Finally, Christian integrity demands open-mindedness.*

And here we think of but one aspect of this matter, and that is that we shall be willing to believe the good about a man with as much alacrity as we would believe the less good!

Time and again we meet people who are beset by the fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin. They do not know what that sin is, but its very mystery makes them sure that, in ignorance, they have become guilty of the sin against the Holy Spirit. Just what is that sin?

A fairly careful study of the content of Matthew 12 brings to us the fact that Jesus was declaring that the closed mind is the sin against the Holy Spirit. It is a mind which is shut so tightly by prejudices that even the presence of Christ himself seems to avail nothing in opening it to the truth. The people who had so sinned disliked Jesus. They could imagine nothing good about him; because they did not agree with him they were sure he was wrong. He did good deeds by the power of Satan! Their minds were closed to the truth, and rather than open them to light they preferred to believe lies about Jesus and to dwell in darkness.

There are many people who may be honest in keeping their promises, but whose minds are closed to further truth. They prefer to believe untruths about their neighbors. They would rather believe the atrocity stories of the "Japs" and the nazis than to imagine any good about them; they prefer never to hear good of anyone whom they have always believed to be evil. God himself can do little with the closed mind.

Read again Franklin's Autobiography and his high estimate of his Dunker friend. The esteem came because he learned that the young man was one of a group who would not set down in a written creed their principles of faith for fear that such an act would become official and compel future generations to believe exactly as their fathers believed and "thereby shut out any further light which God would wish to reveal to them." So, from the very beginning of the Brethren there was at the center of this unwritten creed the high recognition of the continued revelation of God to the unclosed mind.

This same truth was revealed again in the early story of our people in their "Big Meetings." There are no records of the business transactions in the early days because it was said that "should we record our answers to queries our children may be guided by our judgment rather than by the light which God will reveal to them as he sees fit." See how this fear has been realized in some quarters! In how many an assembly of our Brethren does someone appear with an ancient minute book and there offer it as almost equal to Holy Writ in the solution of our problems!

In the church, the community, the nation and the world there is a pitiful cry for persons of Christian integrity. Such persons alone will be able to supply the character without which the future looms dark and forbidding ahead of us.

It is not difficult for us to agree with the assertion that the world needs this essence of the Spirit of Christ; Christians will readily agree to that. The fact that makes us uneasy is that we are the folks who bear the responsibility for bringing such a quality of life to bear upon the issues of our day. If Christian men and women in today's churches do not shoulder that responsibility, who will?

No kind words, no lofty ideals, no gold seals or much-beribboned treaties and documents can bring to pass a new world order. Nothing short of whole-souled consecration to the spirit and person of Jesus Christ can do this. Those who say they are his disciples take upon themselves the weight of the world's failure, or they take upon themselves the daring, the noble, the eternal challenge of being "Christian integers" in a total Christian world!

# *The Man Who Was Good Enough*

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*Two men went up to the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican (Luke 18:10)*

FOR many years it has been the practice of the Brethren to hold a self-examination service just prior to the communion. The need for such a service is stated in 1 Cor. 11:28: "A man should examine himself and only when he has done so should he eat any of the bread or drink from the cup."\* Let us look at the text which presents the self-examinations conducted by two contrasting men. One was a Pharisee; the other was a publican. Jesus gave the parable to bring out the fine qualities of the second man, but we should not overlook the virtues of the first. Few people like him, but he set a standard which is not too easily attained. Most of us feel ourselves better than the Pharisee. Just how good was he?

*First*, he was a churchman; he "went up to the temple." He was not one of the vast group who criticize the church and stay at home. There are some people who attend

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\* 1 Cor. 11: 28. J. W. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Bible, An American Translation*. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press

church just twice — when married and when buried. The Pharisee was not one of that group. We have heard the familiar quotation from Colonel Theodore Roosevelt: "It is true that we can worship God outdoors under the trees, but let us be truthful and admit that we do not. The people who worship God are the ones who do so in the church."

*Second*, he was a devoted man; he prayed. That was his motive for going to church. It would be possible to find many more unworthy motives for attending church than the one stated for the Pharisee, ". . . went up to the temple to pray," motives such as: getting the neighborhood gossip, finding where to secure some hired help, a chance to meet a friend, opportunity to display new clothes or a new car. Such motives and similar ones are not entirely unknown even in the Church of the Brethren. Not only did the Pharisee pray, but he prayed when times were normal. The statement has been made that "there are no atheists in foxholes." He was not in one, but he prayed, anyhow. The majority of people will pray when someone in the family has been in a wreck, when the baby is seriously ill, when some serious crisis is impending; but the Pharisee prayed when things were going along nicely.

*Third*, he gave thanks when he prayed. There are many people who pray, whose chief concern is to get things for themselves. They seldom get farther than prayers of petition. But the Pharisee when he prayed gave thanks. A pastor in New York City said that his parishioners often asked him to pray for them before they started on ocean voyages, but only seldom did one come back when the voyage was over and say, "Thank God with me; I have had a safe return." Someone put this human trait into a little parable. God sent an angel with two baskets to

collect the prayers of men. Into one basket he was to put the prayers of petition and into the other basket the prayers of thanksgiving. The basket of petitions became full to overflowing, but the basket of thanks had but a small prayer or two in it.

*Fourth*, the Pharisee was honest in his business life. He was no extortioner; he was not unjust. In our time it is not unknown to charge all that the traffic will bear for any article. The Pharisee could say that he was not guilty of such practice. There are those who would contend that this has nothing to do with religion. The story is told of a certain colored man who went to a camp meeting. When the preaching had reached a certain fervor he shouted, "Praise the Lord, I've got religion." The preacher, knowing him, stopped him with the question, "Just a minute, Sam. Will your religion make you join the church?" "Yas, suh," answered Sam, "my religion will make me join the church." Later the minister was interrupted by the same listener. "Praise the Lord, I've got religion!" The speaker inquired, "Will your religion make you support the widows and the orphans?" "Yas, suh!" was the reply, "my religion will make me support the widows and the orphans." When the speaker was interrupted a third time he asked a question which caused quiet. He asked, "Sam, will your religion make you pay your debts?" Sam replied, "Now, look here, preacher, dat ain't religion; dat's business."

Sam has many counterparts in our time. When I was a boy there lived in our community an elderly farmer known as Uncle Pete who could honestly say of himself, "I am no extortioner; I am not unjust." My father needed a milch cow, and, hearing that Uncle Pete had one for sale, he went to see him. After he looked at the cow, my father said, "Well, Uncle Pete, how much do you want

for her?" "Thirty-five dollars," said the old gentleman, to which my father replied, "Thirty-five dollars is not enough for that cow, Uncle Pete. You can't get any kind of a cow for less than fifty dollars." The old gentleman replied, "If you want a fifty-dollar cow you will have to go somewhere else. I know what this cow is worth; I raised her from the time she was a calf." This incident seems almost amusing because it is so out of joint with our times. It should not be!

*Fifth*, the Pharisee lived a clean moral life; he was no adulterer. Our papers have recently carried news items about American soldiers standing four abreast waiting to get into Japanese brothels and accounts of American officers in Germany living with German women as guests in their American quarters. But we do not need to go around the world to find examples of similar sinning. You will find them in almost every block in the city and in almost every square mile in thickly populated country. John Brown, the Southern evangelist and college president, has a sermon which he calls Slimepits. The Bible basis for his sermon comes from Genesis 14:10: "And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there." In this sermon it is pointed out that the backwash of slime following the last war was even more dangerous than the war itself. The Church of the Brethren must maintain its high standards of moral life and promote them vigorously in our times.

*Sixth*, he was a self-denying man. He fasted twice a week. Self-denial is not a popular subject. Many of us are like a certain fat lady who went to the doctor to get something to help her to reduce. He gave her a diet list. In two weeks when she came back she stepped on the doctor's scales and found to the horror of both of them

that she had not lost, but had gained. The doctor said, "Did you eat the things I told you to eat?" "Yes," said the lady. "Well, what else did you eat?" asked the doctor. "Nothing but my regular meals," the lady replied. Relief workers in Europe say that America's desire for a full dinner table is the most disturbing element in trying to get relief legislation. We are not so far along as the Pharisee was. We are not willing to practice self-denial. Nothing must interfere with our regular meals.

*Seventh*, he was a benevolent man. "I give tithes of all that I get." The law required a tenth of his salary and of the increase of his cattle. The Pharisee went further and included his garden, too. Before being too severe with the Pharisee, let us get down our own account books and see if we have really done as well. A lay writer has said, "The church must be divine or it would have perished long ago because of its poor business methods." It has often been true that the church has literally begged its way from doorstep to doorstep because the membership of the church did not set aside a dedicated portion for its work.

Do you begin to feel that the Pharisee has been praised too highly? Yet it is not enough to be a church attendant, devoted, thankful, honest, morally clean, self-denying and benevolent. Unless one really sees his shortcomings and desires to do better he can make no greater attainment. The man, like the publican, who may be much farther down the scale in attainment, but who sees his needs and desires to be better, will finally progress much farther in the spiritual life. Paul said, "Forgetting the things which are behind, . . . I press on toward the goal."

There is a graphic story in one verse in Genesis (Gen. 19:14). Lot called at the door of his son-in-law to get the family to leave Sodom. You can almost see the old



gentleman as he stands on the doorstep—long white beard, wind-blown garments, pleading. We can reconstruct the conversation from that descriptive line, "But he seemed unto his sons-in-law as one that mocked." It would be something like this: "What's the matter with Sodom, dad? Sodom is the best city in all the plain. Sodom is all right, grandpa. You must not be feeling so well to-night." They were satisfied with their home, but the doom of God was on its way.

When a traveler in a blizzard comes to that time when his fingers and toes no longer tingle with cold, when he feels that it would be well to lie down on the soft bank of snow and rest, he had better beware. If he lies down to rest he will be overcome by the feeling that all is right with the world—he will be contented, yet freezing to death! That was the trouble with the Pharisee—he was a good man; but he felt that he was good enough, and, feeling so, he would never be any better.

# *Prayer and the Presence of God*

ALBERT C. WIEAND

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PRAYER is a heart-to-heart talk with God, but we do not begin a conversation until we are in someone's presence. A heart-to-heart talk is not possible unless our friend is near. Even over the telephone we do not converse until we have the assurance of someone listening at the other end of the line. So also real prayer is impossible without the assurance of God's presence.

## *What Does Presence Mean?*

BUT how can God be present? And how can we be sure of him? God cannot be seen with our eyes, nor heard with our ears, nor touched with our hands. The physical senses do not reveal him, for he is not physical, but spiritual; and spiritual objects are not perceived by the bodily senses. "God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"; that is, God must be spiritually discerned.

God's presence then is spiritual presence. But what do we mean by spiritual presence? What does the concept of *presence* mean? What are its essential elements? In what sense is God present when we pray? And how can we really know and be conscious of his presence?

When someone is near us, and we can see him and hear him and touch him, when we are fully aware of him and

he is fully aware of us, when he can act upon us and we can co-operate with him, then we have no questions about his presence. But we also think of persons as being present when not so near, if they can see and hear and share with us. Whatever hinders sharing experiences subtracts from or limits or destroys presence; whatever makes sharing possible helps and heightens or intensifies presence. A blind or deaf man is not so fully present as if he could see and hear. If he were both blind and deaf we would not be present at all to him unless he could touch or smell us. If I fall asleep in a meeting, I am not fully present. If I listen to one using an unknown foreign language, I am not as really present as the man beside me who understands every word and is thrilled by what he hears. If I listen to a discourse which I do not understand, presence is greatly impaired.

#### *The Various Degrees and Factors of Presence*

PRESENCE is not a lump sum, nor a brute fact: it may be either a complete or a partial thing. It is made up of various factors, and only part of these factors may be present, and so presence will be partial.

Over the telephone, too, there is real presence, in a sense. It is partial presence, of course; but so far as it goes it is real presence. For, though I cannot see my friend or touch him, still I can hear him and he can hear me. We can share with each other in some very vital degree. If now we could see as well as hear, the sense of presence would be greatly increased, and we could share more fully.

Even the radio brings us real, not imaginary, presence—though, of course, it is still more fractional or partial presence. We hear the speaker, but he does not hear us as over the telephone. We are conscious of him, but he is not directly aware of us. Yet there is a real sharing of

his wisdom or knowledge or opinions with us, but not of ours with him.

Presence, then, means mutual accessibility to one another, for the purpose of sharing with one another.

### *The Experience of Presence*

AFTER all, the experience of presence is essentially an inner experience. When we are in a friend's presence, does not the realization and the enjoyment and the significance of his presence take place within us? He is seated there in the room. Our eyes receive the rays of light that report his presence, but the real recognition of who he is and that he is our friend takes place within. He speaks, and our ears take up the sound waves and convey them to the brain. But the meaning of those sounds and the comfort and wisdom they bring are experienced within.

We think of our friend as out there on the other side of the room, but the real experience of his presence is within our hearts. And the real effects and values of his presence to us are also within.

Just so is our experience of God's presence. We think of him as "our Father in heaven," but all our experience of him is within our own hearts. The realization of his work, of his blessing, of his strength, of his wisdom, of his help, is within.

Doubtless it is best for mental health to think of God as in heaven, as Jesus taught us, and as he himself did. But that does not prevent us from understanding and clearly recognizing that the real experience of God is within us. "The kingdom of God is within you." That is where his control of us, his rule of us, his reign over us, his dominion over us, actually functions. That is where "he works to will and to do his good pleasure."

*King and President*

WHEN we hear the president, or the king, speak over the radio, we think of him as in his executive mansion and the sound of his voice comes to us through the radio and our ears. But the real meaning and effect of that message of the king or the president arises within us. Our experience of it is within.

And so when we think of Christ we think of him as in heaven, with the Father. So he taught us; and that is right. But it is "the indwelling Christ" whom we experience. When Christ helps us it is within us that the change is wrought. There is where the experience arises. There is where our friendship with him really takes place. There is where he walks with us, and talks with us, and tells us we are his own. This is how Christ lives in us. "I will love him and manifest myself to him. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him." It is within us that such experience of his presence and of his help and intimate friendship takes place. It is true of him just as it is true of all friendship.

How then is all this work of God carried on within us? The answer from Scripture is plain. It is by the Spirit of God, by the Holy Spirit. And "religion is the life of God in the soul of man." Religion is fellowship with God; it is sharing one's life in every particular with God; and consequently God also shares his life with us. Such fellowship with God we have, through his Spirit, in our hearts.

*What Is Spiritual Presence?*

WHAT, then, is the meaning of "spiritual presence," and "the presence of God"? In spiritual presence the proximity is not physical nearness, and it is not discernible through the physical senses. God is described as "the

invisible God, whom no man hath seen, or can see." "No man hath seen God at any time." He cannot then be present to the bodily senses, because their sole function is to discern material things. But "God is spirit," and approach to him "must be in spirit." Through spiritual perception by the spiritual senses, God is made known to us. There are spiritual senses as well as bodily senses. There is religious consciousness, as well as sense-consciousness and social-consciousness and self-consciousness.

*What Does the Everywhere-presence of God Mean?*

THE presence of God is described for us in Psalm 139. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" In the height of heaven, in the depth of Sheol, from the farthest east to the uttermost west, he is there. He sees us; he knows us; he is before and behind; he has laid his hand upon us; he knows all about us, even our inmost thoughts and words. And this is true whatever we do, wherever we are, and wherever we may go. There is no corner of the universe where one can be hidden from God, whither one can "flee from God's presence."

The "everywhere-presence" of God simply means that wherever in the universe we may be, there God knows all about us, and is accessible to us, and can help us whatever our need. Distance cannot separate us from God. Only sin can do that. God then is accessible to us wherever we may chance to be. He is as near in one place as in any other. Nearness to him is purely a matter of attitude of heart toward him. And if we seek him "we shall find him—if we search for him with the whole heart." God "is a very present help in every time of need." "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him." He can speak to us any-

where, at any time, any message we are willing to hear. Surely, it is not hard for us who have heard the president of the United States or the king of Great Britain speak when thousands of miles away—have even heard him breathe or clear his throat—it is not hard for us to understand how God may be present to us, may speak to us very really, very intimately, may help us, may “supply every need of ours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

#### *How Modern Experience Illustrates This*

WE live today in a world in which the air is full of voices, good and bad—voices of wisdom, and voices of sin and folly. At will we can tune in on the good, or the evil. Just so, spiritually each one of us is a receiving set. There are spiritual forces all about us—good and evil—and we tune in on them as we will, for good or evil. According as we tune in—that is, according as we make our inward adjustment, according to our spiritual attitude—so shall we gain good or evil, so shall we be transformed into one or the other. “We, all with unveiled face, contemplating as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into his image, by the Spirit of the Lord, from one degree of glory to a higher degree.”

#### *Our Control of Presence*

JUST as the radio waves or impulses are all-pervasive and everywhere, so also is the Spirit of God in every place. Our personalities or spirits are pervaded by his impulses at all times. We can tune in if we will, adjusting ourselves into harmony with him, into co-operation with him. We can “mind the things of the Spirit.” We can discern them; we can desire them, long after them, believe in them, trust them, endorse them, choose them, obey them. “As many as are thus led by the Spirit of

God are the sons of God." If we are led by the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. But "they that are Christ's have crucified self, with evil affections and sinful desires." This is the presence of God for us.

The presence of God in reality is this responsiveness of our souls to the Holy Spirit in our hearts—the Spirit of God, whose impulses for good and for God are at all times pervading our souls, every fiber of our being. But we may be unconscious of these impulses, we may ignore them, we may resent them or quench them, or we may fight them with all our might and resist them.

#### *What Prayer Has to Do With It*

PRAYING is the process of tuning in. Sometimes we do this spontaneously while going about our daily tasks. Sometimes we take time out so that we may concentrate wholly and intensely upon prayer. For, sometimes the Spirit's weighty message to us requires all our powers to take it in. Sometimes we grasp it quickly and easily, while at other times it takes intense, prolonged and repeated efforts to be able to take it in. Sometimes it is a task too great for our powers alone. Then we must call others to our aid so that by co-operative effort and team work we may win.

#### *Presence Then Means Accessibility and Intercommunication*

THE "everywhere presence of God" means simply the accessibility of God everywhere, wherever we may be. Everywhere we see his wisdom and his power at work. Whether we look with the telescope into the infinite spaces above, at the remotest galaxies of stars millions of light-years away; or whether in turn we use the electronic microscope and penetrate to the deepest depths of the infinitesimal and study cell structure or molecules; or if



in thought and scientific research we go beyond even these limits, to the structure of atoms and protons and electrons and neutrons and photons—everywhere we see the same Infinite Wisdom, the same Infinite Power at work.

Just as intensively and infinitely must we think of God as pervading the spiritual world and operating and controlling it. All we need to do then, as a great philosopher of religion has said, is “to inner ourselves” at any moment, wherever we may be; and lo! we stand face to face with God. He is there present ready to “supply every need of ours, according to his riches.” Yes, “he is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”—this infinite God, of whom we speak—who is everywhere, all-pervasively, dynamically present, in love. And “being justified by faith we have access” to him and his all-sufficient grace.

# *Life Begins With Jesus*

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*John 1:1-12*

"IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it . . . but to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God."\*

WE say that a man's life begins on the day of his birth. Every parent understands how curiously inaccurate such a statement is, knowing that long before the hour of birth a little heart beats and a growing spirit is aware. There are some who would ride the pendulum in the opposite direction, asserting that life does not begin until childhood is a thing of the past. There is the example of that eminent author who wrote *Life Begins at Forty*, but who is reported to have raised the figure by ten years on his fiftieth birthday. Others have other ideas about life's

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\*John 1: 1 and 12. From the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, copyright 1946 by The International Council of Religious Education, and used by permission

beginnings. Whenever Robert Louis Stevenson was asked his birthday he gave the date of his marriage. Here is the radio announcer who says that life begins with the use of a certain kind of vitamins. If one were to listen to all these voices he would not know when life really begins.

Or, it may never begin! The real tragedy is that men with all the essentials for the good life merely go through the motions of living. They exist, but they do not live. They eat, breathe, sleep, do their work, watch the calendar years slipping up on them, preserving at all costs the show of respectability, and watching the weary days and months and years roll around, as did Macbeth, for whom the whole sorry business seemed but

*A tale told by an idiot*

*Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.*

Here, then, is our proposition: Life begins with Jesus. It is our affirmation that no man has come to grips with life, scaling its heights and realizing its possibilities, who has not linked himself with the eternal reality which is in Jesus. Until that reservoir of human understanding and divine love which Jesus brought to life is tapped, life has not really begun, for life begins with Jesus.

It makes little difference in what way a man brings his life to grips with Jesus. The all-important thing is that he come face to face with him, that he look deeply into the eyes of the soul of the Son of God, that he feel the irresistible pull of that matchless life of the Master of Men upon his own life, that he give himself without reserve to Jesus—then he shall know that a new and abiding spiritual energy has entered his being which will make all life thereafter different and worth while. "There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ."\*

\* 2 Cor. 5:17. The New Testament: A New Translation by James Moffatt, Harper & Brothers, publishers

## I

LIFE begins with Jesus because with him we enter into companionship with the noblest being who ever lived. As a lad I used to think what a wonderful thing it would have been to live with George Washington, the father of his country, to share the hospitality of delightful Mt. Vernon, to kneel beside him at Valley Forge, his uniform in tatters, pressing the cold bitter earth as he lifted his heart in prayer to God that the struggle for right might not be frozen to a sad ending during that awful winter, to feel the irresistible pull of his leadership, the challenge from the leader to the manhood of the follower . . . what an experience that would have been!

Or what man, had he the invitation to do so, would not enter the laboratory of Thomas Alva Edison, the wizard of Menlo Park, and watch with eager excitement the solemn genius tinkering with tinfoil and a megaphone till he draws out of them the human voice . . . or gaze, disbelieving, as Edison examines, tests, and casts aside hundreds and hundreds of substances until at last one little reed glows and the night is evermore made day because this quiet man has divined another of the deep secrets of this mysterious natural world?

Or, what child would not forever remember descending upon the study of the kindly Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, white maned as a shaggy dog, who could sing at the coming of the children—

*A sudden rush from the stairway,  
A sudden raid from the hall!  
By three doors left unguarded  
They enter my castle wall!*

*They climb up into my turret,  
O'er the arms and back of my chair;*

*If I try to escape they surround me;  
They seem to be everywhere.*

Or, what colored man, living in his own home, possessing a full citizenship, growing to a place of honor and trust in his community, does not feel deep within him a spiritual comradeship with

*The lank man, knotty and tough as a hickory rail . . .  
Whose weathered face was as homely as a ploughed field,*  
Honest Abe Lincoln, whose whole life was the powerful drive which brought emancipation to the black race? For him sons are named. To his memorial the black man comes to gaze up at the giant frame and towering bulk which is the physical likeness of the Great Emancipator.

But a greater than Washington is here, a leader whose challenge is today stronger than ever, to whom men of all creeds and races and classes rally and assert his lordship over their minds and hearts. A greater than Edison is here, one whose insight into the mysteries of the natural world so vastly supersedes that of Edison that he could change water into wine in the twinkling of an eye, could walk on the sea as on the land, could set aright the minds of the unbalanced, wash clean the bodies of the diseased, snap strength into lifeless limbs, look sight into blind eyes, and call forth the dead with the power of his own voice. A greater than Longfellow is here, for never has the world beheld such a lover of children as was this Jesus, who opened his arms and heart to little children and told all of us who think we are so big and so wise that only when our spirits become as the spirits of children can we enter into life. A greater than Lincoln is here, for the Son of Man came to help not only one man in distress, or a whole race in subjection, but to fling wide the gates of freedom and salvation for all men everywhere.

## II

LIFE begins with Jesus because in him we have the picture of the kind of person a man can become. In our topsy-turvydom of slaughter and intrigue and battle which has engulfed our world our thoughts have been primarily upon man's inhumanity to man. That which is beastly rises to the surface and colors our whole concept of what man is. We hear that it is necessary for a man to harden himself to hatred, that it is imperative to strafe men floundering in lifeboats with machine-gun fire so that the last vestige of a convoy be swallowed in Davy Jones' locker, that whole civilizations must be committed to mass starvation ere the rampant brutality and tyranny be banished from the earth. In times such as these we are made to see with shuddering terror the kind of perverted being a man can become. So clearly do we see the satanic actualities of man that we are in danger of forgetting that man has divine possibilities.

Satan has a finger in the human pie, but we must not forget that God made us, that he made us in his image, that his stamp is on us, that the pre-eminent fact about human life is that it is filled with divine possibilities. It ought to be said more often in dark days such as these that the supreme beauty the world has to offer is the beauty of human character. Someday—and none of us know how soon—man is going to reach the high mark for his life which was revealed in Christ. He will prove his worth, the nobleness that is in him will rise up and control his life, the stamp of the loving God who created man in his own image because he sought his fellowship will shine out from his eyes in the look of kindness, cover his hands with deeds of helpfulness, will pervade his whole life and being.

We think that the problems which face us now are world problems, that the sweeping currents which are to determine the future impinge upon the proper manipulating of power politics, the clever establishment of national boundary lines, the balances of power in the United Nations, and the solution of the Russian menace. But we shall never solve world problems unless we solve the human problem. Our world is broken into bits and we think we shall put it together by a battle won, or a treaty signed, or a federation accomplished. We may so put it together for a little while, but we shall never put it together permanently until the longings of men's hearts become more the burden of our thoughts than battles and boats and boundaries. A father, busy in his study, was interrupted by his son eager to romp and play. The father quickly tore into tiny bits a large map of the world and told his son to piece it together on the floor of the living room. In a few minutes the lad came back, the map together. The surprised father asked, "How did you do it, son?" "Oh, it was easy, dad; there was a picture of a man on the back of it."

Our days will be better days, and these grueling days will sooner end, if we retain the vision of what man can become in Jesus Christ. We cannot do it alone. That is our trouble now. We think that alone we can save ourselves. Only in Christ can it be done. All of us are potential Christs, not in the pigmy sense that a man can of his own power rise to the stature of Christ, but in the Biblical sense of opening the heart for Christ to come in and grow up in us until the spirit of Christ possesses our whole being. This transfer of the spiritual personality of Christ is the thing about which Paul was speaking when he said, "I live, yet not I, it is Christ that liveth in me."

## III

LIFE begins with Jesus because in him we find out what kind of being God is and how he is working in our world. For long years men thought of him as a three-faced affair who was inexplicable to the mind of man and must therefore be accepted *in vacuo*. "But they are not three incomprehensible, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible," said the creed, climaxing the dogma in the word, "He therefore that will be saved must believe in the Trinity." For a thousand years or so we tried another tack: It was not for us to know about these things, for God sat down before ever the worlds were formed and framed the thing whole in his mind, plotting the salvation or damnation of every man with inflexible austerity. The description of God was as forbidding as that of Zeus, whose sceptre was a thunderbolt. In recent years we have become less theoretical and more practical—we have made God go down and do battle for us. During the first world war a commanding officer, lustily pounding his chaplain on the back, said, "Sire, you are worth a regiment to my men; you have brought God into the fight on our side."

This arbitrary and loose thinking about God has exacted an awful price. Men and women question the goodness of God. They wonder if to do his will always means to accept the death of babies and the suffering of children. The more bitter—emerging from the holocaust of war and facing a new day as though it were the morning after the earthquake—echo the words of the French cynic, "Your God is my devil."

Certainly this is the hour to lift up the concept of God which Christ came to bring. It is time to tell men to seek the God who is like the shepherd out hunting his lost sheep "until he find it." It is the picture of God as a



father running to meet a wayward son—an unheard-of thing in the Jewish family when the son had turned his back on home. The law permitted his death on sight. It is the picture of God, who, having food, sets out to find the hungry. It is the picture of God as seen in the face of Jesus Christ. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Jesus taught men to think of God as Father. Ninety-two times Jesus speaks of God as Father. He taught men to pray to God as Father. Every time we pray the prayer he taught us to pray we pass through the portals of fatherhood to God, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven." Establish it in our hearts that God is a loving Father. Come to God in the freedom and with the confidence of a little child. He will know you. He will love you. You will know him. You will love him.

One day before the Civil War, H. W. Beecher was troubled with the thoughts of what God was like. He walked out into the environs of Indianapolis, pondering the matter. He knew that the God who loved him could not be the God of wrath of the Old Testament. He saved his ministry that day when there came to him the flashing discovery "that he did not need to believe anything about God that Jesus Christ had not taught and shown and that he could believe and preach everything about God which Christ had revealed." He never deviated from that insight. In fact, men who criticized Beecher said that the trouble with him was that he preached the love of God too much, that there was not enough of the harsh austerity of the Eternal Being in his message.

*Here is the truth in a little creed  
Enough for all the roads we go.  
In love is all the law we need,  
In Christ is all the God we know.*

It is E. Stanley Jones who shows that a planet rushing through space is only a comet on its way to destruction until it is caught by some central sun and begins to revolve around that sun as its center and its life. "So my life," he says, "is an aimless comet burning itself out in its own self-will, till it finds the pull and attraction of Christ's love, halts its deadly way, and forever revolves around him, its central Sun and its Life." Life begins with Jesus.

## *God's Call to Repentance*

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LUKE presents John the Baptist as a great prophet. His word picture of John is a most graphic one. John takes on his significance in the light of the times in which he lived. From Luke's mention of the ruling men of his day, we know that it was an age of degeneracy and moral crookedness. How often God has chosen in such times to fire some soul with love and passion to bring his burning condemnation upon the sins of men! Think of Cæsar, of Herod Antipas, of Herod the Great, of Annas, or of Caiaphas! To review the life of any one of them is but to think of one who was filled with immorality, with cruelty, with greed and with selfishness. And John, true to the role of a prophet, was absolutely fearless in crying out against such sin. It was such forthright condemnation which finally cost him his head. He cried for repentance. In the words of Luke,

*Prepare the way of the Lord,  
Make his paths straight.*

### *John Chooses Isaiah's Picture*

JOHN had given himself to long discipline in the wilderness. Out of that meditation he came with his abiding conviction of the sin of his generation, and of its cure. He was like Isaiah in this. It may have been the Second

Isaiah in whose terms he thought. That matters little. The important fact is that he cried out against the sins of his people. We do well to refresh our minds by turning back and reading from Isaiah 40. His words are most arresting.

Indeed, that was always typically the prophet. Do you recall how Amos went to the northern kingdom and cried out against sin as he saw it there? The king told him to go home, but he paid little attention to that. He was there on a mission for God.

Was John merely a "voice crying in the wilderness" of man's vast sin? A voice lost, seemingly, because of indifference and opposition? Was he hopelessly protesting? Is it ever thus? Without doubt, it seemed so then. It often seems so today. But it is never so. This is God's hope of a better day, through man's repentance. It is also man's only hope of escape from self-annihilation. Immorality, murder, greed and war, without any restraining force, would and will obliterate all. Let us never forget that. The prophetic voice, with the consequent response of repentance upon the part of man, is the hope of a better day. It will stay, to some degree at least, the self-annihilation which man would otherwise bring.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Luke's choice of words pictures the coming of an Oriental monarch. An advance crew has gone ahead to clear the way. John was such a forerunner. God insists that he will have "the crooked places made straight" and the "rough way smooth." But how we think we can get by! We seem to imagine that God is a wishy-washy creature whose demands of righteousness can be conditioned by our moral waywardness! No, God is pleading, but he will have only righteousness. Nothing less will be acceptable. He will not force us, for if he did our response would not be a

righteous one. Righteousness demands high choice. But God will let us go on blundering and sinning if we insist, only to bring upon ourselves misery, heartache and woe. Ultimately, however, righteousness must come, if we want peace and joy and freedom. Repentance, if you please, is the only way. That means sorrow for sin and turning from that sin to accept the way and the will of God. That can happen only when, in deep humility, our little wills give way to God's divine will. That was the message of John and of all the prophets. That was the message of Jesus. That was why he died upon Calvary's cross. That is the heart of God, even today.

### *John's Message of Repentance*

LET us note its severity. "You brood of vipers!" he said to them, "who warned you to flee the wrath to come?" Why was John so severe? I think it was because of their insincerity. He was not speaking of Cæsar, or Pilate, or Caiaphas, or Herod, although they also might have come in for the same scathing condemnation. In them was graft and cruelty and selfishness at its worst. But no, John was denouncing his fellows. Who of us would dare, or think we dared, to speak thus to our fellows? Who of us would try it on our congregations? Doubtless many would feel fearful lest they would need to seek a new place to serve. But John received his salary from no one!

Now suppose we look at our present world scene. We can very easily point to others and say, "There is where condemnation should have started." But we had better look closer. We had better scan the American policies of our time. All during the war just closed, there were rumblings of a mad scramble for empire and markets and world resources. Consider the Arabian oil deal, for instance. We had our fingers in the very middle of that. Or, if one looks at the uncovering of world cartels, in

which we shared, the color of shame rises to one's cheeks. Look at this statement concerning World War II: "This world in which we live is not a milk and bun shop. It is a thieves' den in which the violent survive and the submissive succumb. In it two things predominate—you grab, or you are grabbed. Every kingdom or republic or empire has been built on loot; and every kingdom, republic and empire is ultimately lost to the looter. That you can knock me down is the supreme fact of history. Grab or be grabbed. That is what this war is all about. And whatever your politics or morals may be, I, anyhow, prefer to be a grabber rather than a grabbee. *Grab, grabbing, grabbed*—in these three words is condensed ninety per cent of world history, and in war the remaining ten per cent doesn't count." By whom were those words written? Not by Goebbels or Hitler. They were written by a general of one of the United Nations and published in a Sunday pictorial as a "challenge that should be read by every man and woman."

In depression days, our sin was evidenced in slaughtering two million sheep and six million cattle in order to bolster our prices. That is saying nothing of the cotton and corn and wheat which were plowed under for the same reason. All of this happened amidst hunger and suffering here in our own land. Even now there is much clamor that since the war is over we return to normalcy. Is that what we want today? Do we want normalcy which includes British tyranny over India, American tyranny over the Negro, world tyranny over the Jew, and the despising of the yellow race? Do we want prosperity by crushing the economic systems of other nations? Our crushing of German industry means unavoidable suicide for more than half of its people, we are told. Do we want a normalcy which will be a return to the creation of more

billionaires and millionaires on the one hand and economic slavery for the masses on the other? May 1946 never bring us a return to normalcy wherein we can go on in smug complacency as though "all's well with the world." Instead, may it bring us to deep repentance for sin, public and private, group and individual—a repentance which will bring us to build with and for God! God's call to repentance now, as well as then, is a call based upon firm insistence on right. There is severity in it.

Note, however, that John was speaking to his people. They were a people who trusted in their ancestry and were confident of God's smiling favor upon them. Said they, "We have Abraham to our Father."

### *Our Need of Repentance*

How we pride ourselves on our democratic or our Christian heritage! Within the church we find people proud of their good name, leaning on the devotion of their parents. But we cannot claim any of this as merit for ourselves. In the sight of God, let us strip ourselves of all pretenses! Within the local church are many who are living, serving, giving devotedly. But far too many do it only when they feel like it or deem it convenient. Some individuals actually let months elapse without being found in public worship. They let years elapse without giving any service. We need to repent.

As a denomination, we have trusted in our heritage. It has been a noble heritage, too. We have talked about our historic temperance position, yet find the use of liquor and tobacco making its inroads into our life today. We have said a great deal about our historic peace position, and yet our testimony has been weak indeed, with ninety per cent of our draftees going into the military and vast numbers of our people working con-

tentedly in defense jobs. We prate of peace and practice war. Let us repent!

In the nation, we prided ourselves much on our righteous cause, but Pearl Harbor investigations stripped us of that. At Quebec our president laid the basis for the dreadful Potsdam agreement, by supporting Morgenthau's plan. And so we fail to feed our conquered foes as well as the nazis did their conquered peoples. We spent two billions of dollars to produce the atomic bombs and wiped out two entire cities of Japan with them, and then we turned to talk piously of controlling it for creative purposes. Meanwhile we go steadily on making more bombs. Bombs for what? During this war, we have seen the greatest rise of immorality, of broken homes, and broken lives in the history of the world. It is time that pious prattle cease. Let us repent!

Repentance calls for change of attitude and change of life. Nothing less can satisfy our God. To the multitudes John gave the command to share clothing and food. To publicans came the demand to extort no more. Soldiers were told to be content with their wages and quit all violence. We need to repent, also. We all must repent. Even against our wills we shared in the hell of this war. Some—far too many—shared deliberately. All of us have been caught at some point. Either in taxation, or excess money, in moral support, or at some other place we have contributed toward it. Some have been dishonest, others impure, others halfhearted, and still others bitter. Let every one of us accept God's call to repentance and build for the future that it may not happen again. Time is fleeting. The crisis is upon us. A choice must be made, and made soon.

We stand facing the years. What shall we ask? Normalcy? Or forgiveness? What is our faith in God's way



of repentance? May this counsel for the new day be sufficient for your need and mine:

"I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' He replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way.'"

# *The Good News We Share*

NEVIN H. ZUCK

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## *Romans 1:16*

THE greatest service we can render to any person is to introduce him to Christ, and to the fellowship of the church. We will never render this service unless we believe in a gospel that has in it the power of God. This suggests a familiar text: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," or as Moffatt translates it a bit more positively, "I am proud of the gospel of Christ for it is God's saving power for everyone who has faith."\*

Paul, the author of these words, had preached the gospel in many places: in Tarsus, where he was born; in Jerusalem, the holy city for every good Jew; in Damascus, the world's oldest city; in Ephesus, where the temple of Diana stood. When he wrote this letter to the Romans, he was in Corinth, one of the leading cities of Greece, for he had not yet been to Rome, which was the heart of the world. Over and over again he had said, "I must see Rome," but every time he planned to go something hindered him. Hence he writes the letter to the Romans.

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\*Rom. 1:16. The New Testament: A New Translation by James Moffatt, Harper & Brothers, publishers

Seemingly, someone had suggested that Paul was afraid to go to Rome. The city was then the capital of the world, a center of wickedness and of superstition where the message of Christ might not be readily accepted and where it might not accomplish much good.

In the Roman letter Paul seems to say: "You talk about Rome. I know something about Rome. I am one of her citizens. I have walked over Rome's great highways and bridges. Everywhere I have seen the dust of Rome's marching legions. I know the power of Rome and I am not afraid of it, for I know a power greater than the power of Rome, and that is the power of the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation." And then, unable to contain himself any longer, he speaks forth, "I am proud of the gospel!"

Can we have Paul's high faith in the gospel? Let us see briefly three aspects of "the good news we share."

*We Can Be Proud of the Good News We Share Because It Has the Power to Change Life*

It does not matter too much what we call this experience. The New Testament calls it the new birth and regeneration.

Bishop Arthur Moore of the Methodist Church has suggested that we have been busy the last fifty years trying to do three things: first, to humanize God, that is, to make him a human being and to rob him of his holiness and power; second, to deify man, that is, to make man our god; third, to minimize sin, to make light of it. In his characteristic way the bishop said, "We took sin, we bobbed her hair, plucked her eyebrows, painted her nails, and the old girl looked pretty good to us until we got up close to her."

There are none among us who like what we have seen

across the world as the result of sin. Into this situation comes the gospel with its pointed message and promise, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new!"

The modern psychologist believes that life can be changed, hence this is no time for Christians to give up their belief. After all, the history of the gospel is that of changed individual lives. Here is Peter, changed from a coward to a hero; here is Paul, changed from a persecutor of Christians to the writer of First Corinthians 13; here is Augustine, changed from a dissolute youth to a staunch leader of the church of his day.

Some of our difficulty in accepting this part of our gospel and its power is that we have tried to confine this experience of change to a certain prescribed mold, when the fact is that sometimes this experience has come like a rushing wind, and sometimes like the gentle unfolding of a flower.

Certainly one of the worst heresies of the church today is our lack of faith that human nature can be changed for good. Strangely enough we believe human nature can be changed for the worse. During the past war, young men who in normal times would not have killed a puppy have been taught to blow out the brains of a so-called enemy, and to do it with dispatch.

The gospel we share says that there is sin and evil in the world which will drag a man down; but it also says the far greater thing, that in Christ sin and evil may be defeated. Someone has said, "Human nature is by God's grace and man's obstinacy what it is, but it is for humans to say what with God's help it shall become." Certainly the greatest need in the world of tomorrow is changed men.

*We Can Be Proud of the Good News We Share Because  
It Is Always Saying, "The Best Is Yet to Be"*

No man can believe in a sovereign God and not believe in the ultimate supremacy of God. The New Testament offers abundant proof of this. The tomb in Joseph's garden is empty! Christ lives! "He alone liveth and was dead and is alive forever more."

Whatever else may be a mystery in the Book of Revelation, we do see the white horse and the rider going forth "conquering and to conquer." We may describe the details of the future in several ways, but the basic conviction of it all is that "the best is yet to be!" Our hope is that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. . . ."

The New Testament is the story of people with hope who triumph over trouble. It starts with the killing of innocent little children, and it closes with the persecution of Christians. At the heart of it is a cruel cross and the horrible death of the Savior. Our Lord says in it all, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Woodrow Wilson had a great dream of a community of nations. A group of jealous politicians defeated his plan, but even in his last illness he did not despair. When a friend spoke pessimistically about the League of Nations, Wilson, a broken man, raised himself on his bed and said, "Don't worry, they can't stop God."

Just so for us the sky has not fallen, the world has not come to an end, there will be a tomorrow, and that tomorrow with God will be better than today.

*We Can Be Proud of the Good News We Share Because  
It Substitutes Love, Co-operation and Comradeship for  
Hate, Competition and Slavery*

GENERAL MacArthur has well said, "Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn have failed. We have had a last chance. If we do not devise some greater system, Armageddon will be our doom."

We should know now what hate can do, and we should know too what force and destruction cannot do. It is rather interesting that we seldom place on public buildings the words, *Love your enemies*. We had better see the wisdom of our Lord's words now.

One of the pathetic scenes of the war days was that of the soldier who was saying good-bye to his pastor. Said the lad, "I am going to war. There doesn't seem to be anything else to do, but keep on saying it for our sakes." Keep on saying it: "Christ's way is love, co-operation, and comradeship." Keep on saying, "We are brethren in the household of faith."

The experience of a Chinese Christian girl is in point here. With every member of her family killed by the onrushing Japanese, the girl worked among the sick and the wounded on both sides of the lines. She actually walked five miles into enemy territory to get chloroform for hospital use. In the evening prayer meeting she prayed, "Oh, Lord, bless the people of Japan who are sure to be suffering as much as we are from this war. Oh, God, please help us to root out of our hearts all fear and greed and hate and pride, for we know these are the things that make wars like this possible."

Here is the only way out! We will have to keep on saying it for the sake of our youth, and for the sake of all the peoples of the world.

CERTAINLY this good news we share is the power of God unto the salvation of the individual and of the life of the group. Perhaps another familiar word of Paul has been coming into your mind as you read. In a world of change, in a world that is burning, now abides faith, faith that God in Christ can change life; now abides hope, hope that the best is yet to be; now abide love, co-operation, comradeship instead of hate, competition, and slavery. This is the good news we share!

# BRETHREN PREACHING TODAY



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